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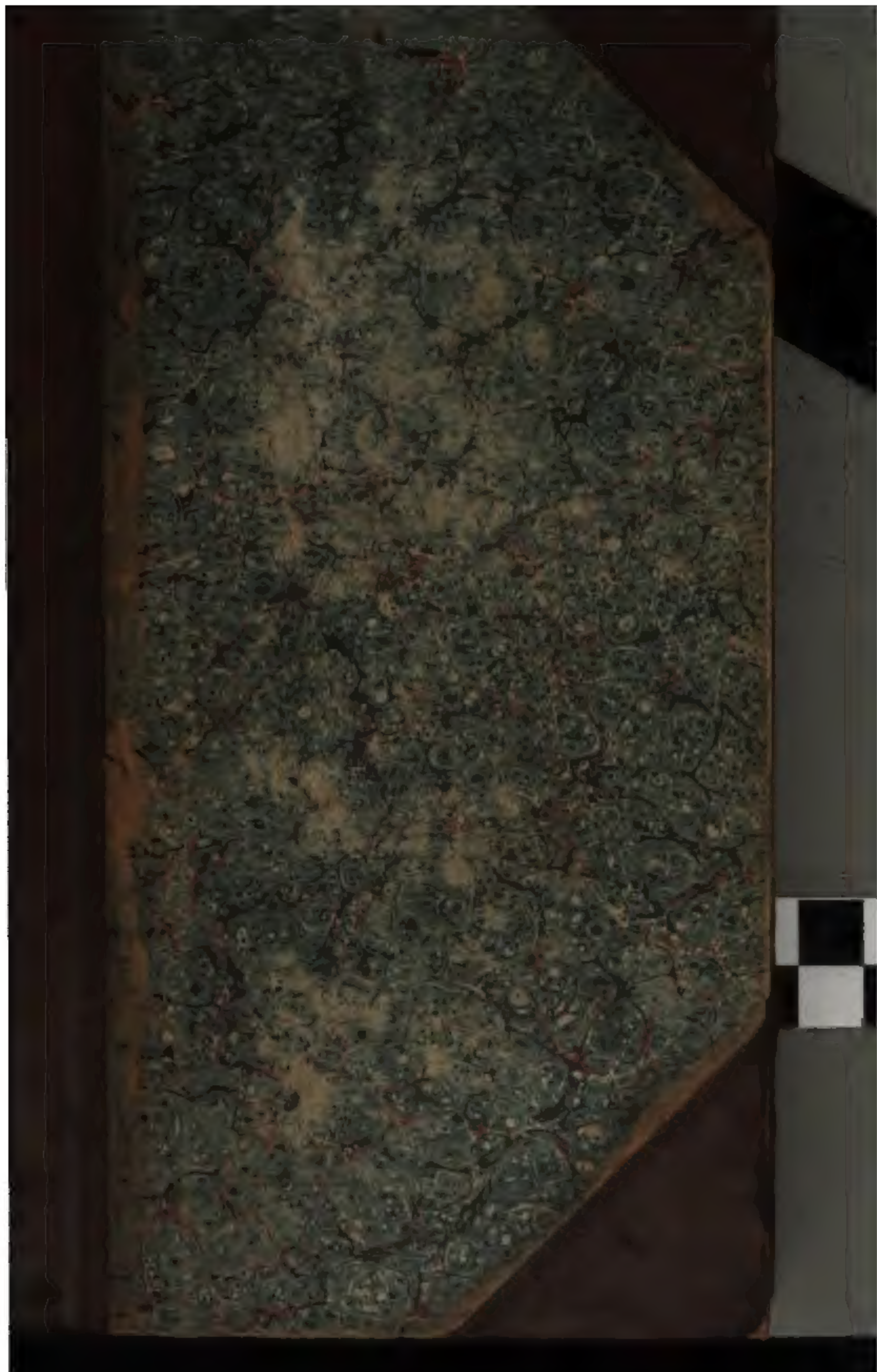
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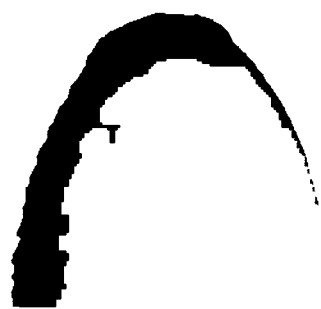


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AN ESSAY

UPON

NATIONAL CHARACTER:

BEING

AN INQUIRY

INTO

SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL CAUSES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO FORM  
AND MODIFY THE CHARACTERS OF NATIONS IN  
THE STATE OF CIVILISATION.

BY THE LATE

RICHARD CHENEVIX, Esq.

*F.R.S. L. AND E., M.R.I.A., &c.*

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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IN the introductory chapter the Author has detailed the motives which suggested this Essay—an undertaking for which he was eminently qualified by the possession of talents which have associated his name with the history of science in the present age, by the variety and extent of his literary attainments, and by an intimate knowledge, acquired from personal observation, of the distinctive features of National Character in the principal states of Europe.

The Author's thoughts had during many years been constantly directed to this subject; and in connexion with it he had written several articles in the *Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews*, on the comparative state of England and France, which attracted much attention at the time of their appearance.

The manuscript of these volumes had been placed by the Author in the printer's hands for publication, a short time before his decease; and, in compliance with a wish expressed by him in his last moments, the Editor has carefully revised the whole work, and superintended its progress through the press.

THOMAS PERY KNOX.

*London, Oct. 26, 1831.*





**C O N T E N T S**  
**OF**  
**T H E F I R S T V O L U M E.**

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ON  
**NATIONAL CHARACTER.**

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**CHAPTER I.**

**GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS UPON THE STUDY OF  
NATIONAL CHARACTER.**

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**PART I.**

Introduction—General Preliminaries respecting National Character.

THE object of the present essay is to inquire into some of the principal causes which contribute to form or modify the characters of nations in the state of civilisation.

By the character of a nation is to be understood the combination of the prominent and leading features by which that nation is distinguished. Though every member of society has peculiar humours and dispositions which constitute the individuality of his mind, yet there are certain general outlines which comprehend the entire mass, and which cannot fail to be discovered by minute and well-directed observation.

To place this in a clearer point of view, let the three following cases be supposed.

First. If a painter be desired to give a representation of a single indefinite plant, and if no bounds are set to his imagination, he is at liberty to draw the most beautiful which he can conceive. He may mingle light and shade, create forms, and combine qualities, in such a manner as to embody on his canvass an ideal image of perfection. Still, however, he must express what every sound perception will recognise as having a possible prototype in nature. Poets, novelists, writers of imagination, are painters of mankind upon the same principles.

Secondly. If it be required that one particular flower be copied, no room is left for fancy. The artist must represent precisely what is given to him as a model. He must examine every part of it, and place it in every light. He must not neglect its very defects; for even they contribute to give it a specific character. In the former case, he would roam through the vegetable world, and collect into a single specimen all the graces of nature. He must now look only to the object before him, and his sole aim must be to produce a faithful imitation of it. Such is the duty of every moral portrait painter, who copies originals; and such is most particularly the obligation of historians and biographers.

Lastly. If a wider view be taken, if the painter be placed before an extensive landscape, his task becomes different. In the great mass of verdure which he beholds, the variety of minuter shades is not distinguishable. The red, blue, white, and yellow flowers, however lively their tints may be, when seen alone and near, are all confounded in the mingled prospect, and the result is one universal green. Of this nature is the appreciation of national character. It is the universal green, if the expression may be allowed, resulting from the union and mixture of the characteristic hues of every individual, which must be looked for, and accidental variations must be rejected.

The period at which society has reached the state of civilisation naturally presents itself as that most worthy of investigation; not only on account of the high development which the human faculties have then attained, but also as comprehending every cause which can influence the mind. To this condition of society, then, inquiry shall principally be directed; and the previous steps of social progress shall be considered only as its necessary preliminaries.

From this sketch concerning the object of the present essay, it may be thought a presumptuous undertaking, and beyond the power of any single person. It can hardly be supposed within the reach of an individual to acquire such a knowledge of the character of millions, as may enable him to pass sentence on them. If we spend our life with a single friend, if we see him in his most unguarded moments, when

he has no motive for dissembling, and no power to deceive us, can we yet say that we possess infallible means of forming our judgment of him? How great, then, will be the difficulty, when we have to pronounce upon the multitudes of which a populous nation is composed!

But we attach, in fact, a very different meaning to the expressions,—knowing the character of a single individual, and knowing that of a nation. The majority indeed of the persons whom we meet with in life, pass before our eyes without leaving in our memory a trace of their existence. If, however, one among the number excite a warmer interest, our whole attention is fixed upon him. We observe him in the minutest particulars of his disposition. We endeavour to fathom every thought, and to follow every movement of his soul. But all that can be hoped for with respect to a nation, is a general knowledge of the leading features of its character; of that prevailing shade which results from a comprehensive view of all its elementary colours.

But, beside this, there are reasons inherent in the nature of the subject which show, that the appreciation of national character is not attended with all the difficulties which, at first, appear to bid defiance to human observation.

First, then,—The pursuits and passions of an individual are more complicated than those of a nation. Whatever does not affect the bulk of society, though it may act strongly upon individuals, cannot be considered as contributing to national character. Conquest, commerce, liberty, whatever has been among the pursuits of empires, are objects round which the wishes of mankind unite. Against these, opposition is principally levelled by the jealousy and power of other nations, whose intercourse is remote, and whose influence is slow. But a single being, surrounded by his fellow-creatures, with each of whom he stands in multiplied relations, must be acted upon by causes more numerous, though more minute, than can affect a community.

Secondly,—An obstacle to the study of individual character, which may be neglected in observing the character of a nation, is dissimulation. Should an individual pursue a system of concealment, the true temper of his mind may



long remain unknown; but it is impossible that such a combination should be entered into by a nation as can hide its real disposition; and it would be more easy for a ferocious people to become humanised, than to assume the garb of humanity.

Thirdly,—Another obstacle which militates against the study of individuals, is change of character. It is true that as men and nations advance from infancy to mature age, new circumstances arise; and a succession of events awakens new passions in both. The toy which amused a child, the care of flocks which occupied a young society, give place to other pursuits, as children grow to manhood, and nations become polished. Now, even if no other cause but the natural expansion of intellect be admitted, the change must be quicker in individuals; for the life of man is measured by years, while the existence of nations is counted by ages. Every change of situation, from health to sickness, from happiness to misery; all that, in prosperity, can elate the mind, or, in adversity, depress it, are perpetually operating on individuals. Nothing less than a total subversion of the basis on which society is established can act with sufficient energy to cause a sudden alteration in the character of a nation.

Fourthly,—As a further preservative against the illusions which dissimulation or change might produce in national character, the records of history may be consulted.

Had the transactions of every great society since the creation of the world been preserved to this day, a body of laws of which few sciences could boast would now be extant concerning human character. But the history of more than half the globe, during more than half the time of its existence, either never was recorded, or has been lost; and few memorials remain which can truly be called characteristic. Still, however, though much is left to be wished for, much has been done; and the annals of our ancestors, imperfect as they are, are sources of valuable information, concerning the philosophy of national character.

Another thing which facilitates this study is, the variety of persons who may be observed by those who wish to solve

the problem. Inquirers may live surrounded by the best means of information, and, as it were, plunge into the waters which they wish to taste. They may convert the objects of their study into a thousand shapes. The qualities which they cannot sufficiently discriminate in one person, they can force into a clearer light in another; and they have all the assistance which comparison can afford.

It is by no means the purport of this essay to be descriptive. The intention is to investigate general causes; to deduce consequences from history, and from observations upon living men and empires. Without subjecting the writer to the charge of egotism, it may be proper to state the motives which suggested the undertaking, the situation in which it was pursued, and the opportunities which he had of collecting and digesting the materials.

Placed by fortuitous circumstances in the midst of one of the most tremendous political convulsions that ever agitated a civilised and powerful people, and spread its influence over an enlightened world, his attention was soon engrossed by the scenes which were passing around him. An immense population, conceiving all at once that they had yielded up too large a share of their natural liberties, led or misled by the lights of what they called philosophy, undertook to reform their political condition, and to correct the malpractices which offended them. The farther they advanced in the career of imaginary freedom, the more they became heated in the pursuit; and, in the warmth of their frenzy, each person formed to himself a different idea of the object which all had in view. One single point there seemed to be, round which all rallied; and that was, destruction. The more moderate sought to destroy a little; the most frenetic would have demolished everything. A greater horde of passions than ever at once broke loose upon mankind burst forth from among the ruins of the oldest monarchy of Europe, and all were gigantic. The vices and virtues which grew amid the conflict could no more be rated by the common standard of human good and evil, than could the winds which issued from the cavern of Eolus be measured by the breezes of Tempe. On every

side the soul found something to make it shudder, even when it admired; and the nation, in which this awful scene of desolation was acting, had long been civilised, powerful, luxurious, and corrupted.

The contemplation of such a super-excitation of moral energy naturally led to the questions—Why are these things so? and, Would they be thus elsewhere?

The most direct mode of obtaining an answer, was to compare the history of the French with that of other nations. A coincidence soon became manifest between what was thus learned, and what observation detected in living examples. A connexion, as little variable as human affairs could allow, became manifest between the sentiments, passions, and intellects of nations, and the situation in which they had been placed by nature; and all their actions, all their thoughts, their institutions and the minds which formed them, their government, religion, philosophy, industry, all seemed to follow, as natural and necessary consequences, from the circumstances which acted upon their feelings, moral and physical, from the very first moment they became inhabitants of earth. To unravel this great mystery, but little assistance could be found in previous works. Various as are the aspects under which man has been considered, but little attention has been paid to the laws which govern the characters of nations. The sublimest speculations concerning the human heart and understanding are inapplicable to such a view of nature as is here proposed to be taken. The enterprise, however, was pursued with constancy. Of all studies, that of mankind is the most easily prosecuted in conjunction with another; for whatever does not exclude the species, leaves some opportunity of indulging in it. The hours of relaxation are those during which the thoughts may be busied in collecting observations; and from every occupation, however abstruse or captivating, they can turn with cheerfulness to the contemplation of our fellow-creatures, and find repose and comfort in a study so near to the heart.

But on no topic, perhaps, is a greater profusion of errors current, than on human character, as is fully proved by the

diversity of opinion which prevails respecting men and nations.

One cause of this diversity is the particular natures and dispositions of the observers, which are variously acted upon by the natures and dispositions of others, and of which no account is taken. To study one's own character is an indispensable step towards studying mankind. "Know thyself" was long laid down as one of the first principles of ethics. "Know thyself" is the first precept toward the general study of human character.

To a thorough knowledge of self, must be added a long and constant habit of observing men. There is not a single branch of science which does not require some labour and attention; there is not even a mechanical art to which some apprenticeship is not necessary. No naturalist would visit the Alps, with a view to examine the structure of the globe, unless he had devoted some time and study to every object which could mature his judgment, and give validity to his opinions. Yet persons who have passed their lives with books, who have seen human nature in print, or who have not seen it at all, go to distant nations, and describe, as universal truths, what they perceive there, under impressions arising from inexperience and astonishment.

The usual feeling upon first visiting a foreign country is surprise, the natural attendant upon novelty; and the sentiment is shared not only by the vulgar, but by the enlightened. It is accompanied by pain or pleasure, as the objects seen are in discord or in harmony with the disposition of the observer; but in either case, it is generally exaggerated. Every day diminishes the impression; till, at length, the customs which astonished inexperience are looked upon with as little wonder as those which were left at home. But no condition of mind is more hostile to calm observation than a state of emotion, which magnifies and disfigures truth. On the other hand again, when habit, which has the power of destroying sensibility to peculiar customs, has diminished the perception of things worthy of attention, much which, when new, excited astonishment, no longer attracts observation.

There is, however, a middle condition of mind most favourable both to observation and induction ; when the edge of novelty is somewhat dulled, yet still sufficiently keen to excite curiosity, and stimulate attention ; in which the vivacity of perception is undiminished, and the judgment unbiassed by emotion. The precise moment at which this condition is attained must depend on the mind and habits of the observer. But the mode in which it may be retarded or accelerated is one of the most essential considerations, in preparing for the study of national character.

However competent the observer of nations may be to appreciate individual character, he will find himself at a loss the first time he applies his knowledge to a larger sphere. Even if he travel into more countries than one, his first visit to each will not find him in that placid mood which suits the operations of judgment ; for every where he will meet with something which he had not seen before. But if he return by the same tract on which he set out, he will be struck by the enlargement of his ideas. Many things will appear to him in a corrected shape ; and he will perceive the necessity of judging by comparison as well of nations as of all other things. He will never take a second journey to any country, without learning that, in the first, he had fallen into many errors, which required a third or a fourth visit before they were removed. He will become apprised, that the safest method is to take a general view at first, and to reserve a more minute acquaintance for a further occasion. Of all means, comparison will afford the greatest assistance ; and the prompt but not hasty confrontation of the manners and habits which he wishes to study. If the time which he can bestow is short, he will find more benefit in repeating his visits alternately, than in protracting his stay, first in one country, then in the other. If he pass the limits of neighbouring states frequently, and at short intervals, having previously formed a well-grounded acquaintance with them individually, he will reap new pleasure and instruction from every journey. It is indeed difficult to conceive a higher satisfaction than that of observing the propensities of our fellow-creatures, spread over immense continents, long the seats of civilisation and

refinement. A perpetual variety of interest leads the traveller every day a little further on his speculative enterprise ; and the more he proceeds, the more his thirst after knowledge will be gratified and excited. Sometimes he will find common characteristic features in nations separated by vast intervening tracts ; while others he will see divided by a mountain or a rivulet, nay, by some imaginary line, which has no trace upon earth, no prototype in the heavens, as different as civilised men can be. If his excursions are in Europe, his observations will be of unbounded interest and importance, because there he beholds the intellectual being in his most intellectual condition.

If men and nations understood each other ; if they all spoke a language measurable by one universal standard, there would be no necessity for any glossary to interpret what they spoke and acted, except their words and actions. But their sentiments and passions are far more different than the idioms which attempt to express them. A feeling which thrills through every human heart, in one region, is feebly acknowledged in another ; while, a little farther to the right or to the left, a new series of ideas rules with arbitrary sway. Words and things have a different value in every breast ; and virtue, honour, power, happiness, are terms which each interprets by his own peculiar mind. Even the nations who have fought for freedom have bled for it under various forms ; and the liberties of Rome and Britain were no more alike than the republics of Sparta and of France.

To bring the minds of men to the same level, to bestow on them all an equal delicacy of perception, or the same accuracy of judgment, would be as chimerical as the wild projects of universal monarchy, or universal fraternity. The storm of passion cannot be allayed by any magic of words ; the bitterness of opposing parties cannot be sweetened by any dictates of philosophy. While power is gratifying, while wealth procures enjoyment, while men are ambitious, nations will seek supremacy, and armies will contend. No hope of endless perfectibility, then, is here indulged ; neither is it denied that events will continue in future ages, as in past times, to revolve within a certain, though a widening orbit,

where empires will shine for a period, to set in glory or in shame. Yet surely by stating the principles upon which men and nations interpret expressions, apparently synonymous, and appreciate ideas that seem capable but of one single value, some prejudices may be diminished, and some animosities allayed. Did not the endless diversity of human disposition make language as various and capricious as itself, or could greater precision be used in estimating human character, some healing assimilation might be hoped for among the jarring opinions of our fellow-creatures. But the nature of man does not admit of absolute modes; and his best destiny in this world seems an indefinite approximation to perfections which he never can attain.

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## PART II.

**General Considerations respecting the simple Fundamental Faculties of Human Nature as connected with National Character.**

THAT the Author of nature has endowed his creatures with innate faculties, can no more be doubted, than that he has given them existence. To the most ignorant observer, it must be evident, that the first manifestations of life are little more than manifestations of powers coeval with life.

To discover what those faculties are has been the object of philosophers for many ages; but the subject is so abstract, that it has given but little satisfaction to inquiry. Catalogues, indeed, have been made out by inductions and reasonings, rather than by observation; and functions have been mistaken for faculties. Unanimity, then, could not be expected in the result of these investigations; and the science of mind and feeling has remained a labyrinth of confusion, from the days of Anaxagoras down to the nineteenth century.

To enter into the various systems of metaphysics which, announced as immortal, soon followed their predecessors to oblivion, is foreign to the present inquiry. Neither would



it be more relevant to offer anything in their place. The object here is not to examine what may be the original faculties of man, but only what are those powers which are called into action by the general constitution of society; and what are the circumstances which give those powers a greater or a less development. This shall now be attempted.

Man has no innate ideas; but the powers by which he acquires ideas are innate. So are his propensities, his feelings, and all the faculties by which he perceives surrounding objects, and reflects upon their relations.

These powers are all spontaneously developed; if they were not so, man would be in part his own creator. They may, however, become active—not all at the same moment—but one after another; neither does their successive manifestation contradict the assertion that they are innate. All seeds do not spring out of the earth in equal times, even though of the same species. The law which governs the development of the human faculties is the wisest which could be devised. Every one of them becomes active at the precise period when the growth of intellect and body requires its assistance. In infancy the powers of perception are indispensable, as, by them, the first knowledge is collected; in manhood reflection comes to mature our perceptions, and to enable us to draw conclusions. But we must perceive before we can reason.

The progress of the propensities and feelings is the same. Those which are indispensable to existence are the earliest developed; those which are necessary in order to communicate that existence to others, become active at a later period; but not until some preparatory faculties have preceded them, to fit the full-grown being for the task of parent.

All that man is, all that he can become, he is, or will be, by his innate powers. Without them he can do nothing. If he be social, it is because a power which draws him toward his species is implanted in his nature. If he feel that the soil which he has made productive is his, in virtue of the labour by which he has purchased its fertility, it is because a sense of property is inborn in his mind. If he



know that the invasion of that property is a violation of justice, it is because a native sensibility to right and wrong has told him so. These and other faculties are the foundations upon which the social state is founded, and by them it is preserved; neither could it exist without them. To say that these powers arise from the social state, is to mistake the effect for the cause. Man was destined for society; to dwell in houses, not in fields,—to yield up a part of his personal independence for political freedom,—to worship God in companionship with his fellow-creatures,—to scan the heavens in thought,—to combine the scattered elements of wisdom into philosophy,—to give the inert fragments of shapeless matter, order, form, and motion. To do these things and more, much more, is his nature; and his Creator has provided him with means—with faculties adapted to those ends. That those faculties are adequate to their attainment, is proved by the distance at which the species now stands, from where it stood originally—by the contrasted state of Europe and Africa.

All the powers then, which will come under consideration in the present inquiry into national character, are innate; and no condition of society can exist but in virtue of those innate powers. To whatever height of civilisation, to whatever cultivation of intellect, nations may have reached, they have done so by their assistance, and could not have done so without them. But they can create no faculty; they can give themselves no new power; they can merely develop those which were born within them. Education, that is to say, the circumstances to which they are exposed during their whole existence, modify, increase, diminish their native powers; and, in the lapse of ages, were they to accomplish the hopes of endless perfectibility of which visionaries dream, still they will be able to use no faculties but those which God has given.

Those faculties are by no means bestowed upon all men in the same proportion. They are as diversely granted to different individuals as external appearance. None would pretend to say that strength, beauty, stature, are the work of accident, not of original design; neither is it more

rational to suppose that diversity of mind and disposition is not innate\*.

But though individuals are born different, it by no means follows that nations are created according to the same law. Nations are not the immediate productions of nature. Were they so; were mankind divided into empires upon any definite principle, those divisions would be as permanent and as distinct as the limits which bound the human form, and separate man from man. The Sabines, the Etrusci, the Latins, would not one day be separate nations, and the next day Romans; nor would the people whose first dominions were less than the seven hills of their city, have

\* Such were the general opinions of the writer of this essay, and such the principles upon which it was conceived, before he had become acquainted with a system which puts this question beyond a doubt. The discoveries of Dr. Gall, enlarged and elucidated by his pupil, Dr. Spurzheim, a man in all respects worthy to succeed him, have done more to determine what the original, simple, fundamental faculties of mankind are, than all that had been conceived since the first dawn of science in remotest antiquity. The superiority which this system can claim over all that have preceded it, is, that it is entirely the result of observation, directed, not by speculation, but by facts; assuming no data, demanding no hypothesis; but deliberately proceeding from the absolute ascertainment of one truth to that of another, as rigorously as an inquiry, half moral, half physical, can do; and much more rigorously than had ever before been attempted by metaphysicians. The consequence is, that, independently of the relation of brain to intellect, of cerebral development to mental manifestations, phrenology, tried by the same law as any other moral system, and considered as merely speculative, can satisfactorily explain a greater number of phenomena, and account for a larger variety of sentiments and affections, seemingly incomprehensible, than any theory that ever was devised to explain the complicated nature of human beings.

The writer, however, does not by this imply that he had, by abstract reasoning or otherwise, discovered the faculties or the system announced by these philosophers. He has no such pretension. What he asserts is, 1st, that he had admitted no faculty as primary and simple, which, to his great satisfaction, he has not found in their catalogue; 2ndly, that he had always attributed the condition of men and nations to innate faculties, and never had considered any faculty as created by any condition in which men or nations could stand; 3rdly, that of all the systems of ethical philosophy which have come to his knowledge, the metaphysics of phrenology are those to which the opinions that he himself has long entertained bear the greatest resemblance; 4thly, that, of all systems, that which admits no innate difference in the minds and dispositions of men is the most repugnant to his reason. The truth or falsehood of the system of national character maintained in this essay, however, is wholly independent of the truth or falsehood of phrenology.

found confines only at the extremities of Europe, Asia, and Africa. The formation of national character cannot then be a work of Nature, since nations themselves are not a work of her hands.

What Nature has created, is regions; regions diversified by natural circumstances and situation; made more or less habitable by the qualities of soil and climate; more or less secure by the nature of her boundaries; more or less accessible, in proportion to the paths which lead to them; more or less improveable, according to the faculties which wants and opportunities bring into action in the minds of their inhabitants. These, together with seas, rivers, and mountains, with all the great features which can serve as boundaries between empires, she has created. She has, moreover, intended the existence of large social aggregates, since she has bestowed on man all that is necessary to form them. But what she never said is,—“Thus far shall a nation extend, and no farther.”

The direct and immediate influence of Nature, then, was manifested in forming the characters of men in regions; and the manner in which she formed them is an important question. Did they issue from her hands already fitted to the countries which they were to inhabit, endowed with all the qualities which might be useful there, and with none others? Or did she merely compose them of such plastic materials, as could receive impressions from the situations in which they were placed?

The diversity of circumstances which prevail in the different regions extending from the north to the south of our globe, the varieties of natural situation induced by partial and local accidents, necessarily have a powerful influence over the minds of the inhabitants. Different wants must be their consequence; and those wants must appeal to the faculties by which they can be satisfied. Whether, therefore, regional characters—if the term be allowed—be considered as original or as secondary, as the direct work of nature, or as proceeding from the action of local circumstances, it is at least certain, that the characters of men are influenced, and most essentially too, by the cir-

cumstances to which they are exposed in the regions where they dwell.

But, since the situation in which men are placed has so mighty an influence upon their characters, it would be unnecessary to create them different in different regions. The wants under which a Laplander is oppressed, different from those which weigh upon a Caffre, are sufficient to make those two nations dissimilar, and to give them minds congenial to their respective situations. Why form them originally dissimilar, when they are sure to become so as soon as they are called upon to act? It is not, then, contradictory or unphilosophical to say that human dispositions were infinitely varied by nature, through the entire species, but without any regard to regions, and still less to nations; that the law according to which they have been varied is common to the whole globe; that they were created similar, or, to speak more correctly, that they were similarly diversified all over the world; and that the varieties which now exist are not the result of the direct influence of nature, but of the situations in which men live, in the places where their generations have been scattered.

But, be the question of original dispositions, whether in men or nations, decided as it may, the investigation would afford little satisfaction in the examination of more tangible causes. For the same reason several other doctrines—such as whether the hypothesis of the unity, or the plurality of human races be most satisfactory; whether the hereditary transmission of qualities, natural or acquired, be admissible or not, may be entirely neglected. Many indeed are the questions relating to the human heart and mind, upon which nothing more can be attained than fanciful reasoning and ingenious speculation; and which long will remain among the problems of indeterminable metaphysics. No effort of beings whom the Creator has formed with limited faculties can alter elementary principles; and the earliest influences to which human creatures are exposed by nature, are too subtle for man to seize, and too far removed from the sphere of his observation for him to appreciate, or so to dispose, as to make them dependant on his will, or subservient to his designs.

## PART III.

Summary of the general Causes which contribute to form or modify the Characters of Nations in the state of Civilisation.

**THE** causes which contribute to form or modify the characters of nations may be comprised under two heads: those which, acting directly either upon the physical or the moral nature of man, may be held as primary; and others which, being themselves the results of primary causes, react in their turn upon the mind, and complete, as it were, the disposition which the former had begun.

In the first class of causes are included all the natural circumstances relating to the country in which men dwell. Such are climate, soil, temperature, dryness, damp, and geographical position, as surrounded by lands or waters; the surface, as hilly or even; fertility, comprising the nature, no less than the quantity, of the produce, and the ease by which it is acquired. These are properties which come into action at the very first instant that a country possesses inhabitants; and they continue to act until it is depopulated.

To the second class belong all causes connected with the social state, and with the progress of mankind. They are entirely secondary, and are consequences of those which have been enumerated in the first class. Among them are religion, government, industry, literature, &c.; together with everything which, being established among men as an institution of society, can impart an impression to the mind.

In the very early stages of society, the former class of causes is most powerful, because precautions are not yet abundant enough to shelter man from their action. Hunters, who pursue their game day after day; shepherds, who attend their flocks in open fields; husbandmen, who till the soil in all weathers, feel the inclement sky, enjoy the ray of sunshine, more keenly than men whom science has taught to make Nature pliant to their wants. The most direct influence of these causes is over the physical nature of human

beings ; but this speedily reacts upon their moral nature. Besides this, too, a direct influence over their moral nature is exercised by the same causes ; and these being alike in every case, it follows that no contradictory impulses can be given to character by the different modes in which it is acted upon by primary causes.

The same is the result of the influence of secondary causes. As government, religion, industry, literature, are all modelled by the impressions which the early minds of nations receive from natural circumstances, it must ensue that none of those institutions can be in opposition to these circumstances ; and that their reaction must be in exact conformity with the causes which originally modelled both the minds and the institutions\*.

The preceding principles will be made more intelligible by an example. Among the most general of national institutions, is government. It cannot be denied, that government is a consequence of the national mind ; and that the national mind is the result of the natural circumstances to which the nation is exposed. Government therefore is a result of natural circumstances. Government then cannot produce any effect upon the mind of a nation which is not in unison with the effect produced by natural circumstances.

A still stronger case is that of industry, the most general of all the national concerns which are abandoned to the spontaneous wills of the entire population. If the soil be poor, the climate cold, the country hilly, the land intersected with too many waters, exertions must be made to overcome those natural obstacles to comfort ; and industry must be rational. It is indispensable, and its modes are regulated by necessity. If natural circumstances are different from these ; if the soil produce

\* History, indeed, may furnish one or two examples of apparent contradiction between these causes and their results, and of seeming exceptions to the general laws respecting national character. But these cases shall be explained in due time ; and it will then appear that not a single contradiction, not a single exception, occurs in the annals of the world.

freely and abundantly; if the climate invite to repose, rather than to activity; if gold and perfumes abound—industry is useless, and exertion superfluous. In this case, no necessity for labour will turn the mind aside from the luxurious idleness to which natural circumstances invite it; and men will be more inclined to enjoy than to reflect. But, in a situation like the former, soil and climate call men to activity. The ground requires their labour, and their whole situation demands their attention. Labour, activity, attention will, in their turn, react upon their minds; and thus the dispositions arising from primary and from secondary causes are congenial.

To examine the manner in which these secondary causes result from natural circumstances; to inquire how they have been promoted and diffused among the nations which have stood the foremost in the world; to investigate what their reaction was in the countries where they have been established, is the business of the following pages. An investigation of the human character, in all stages and epochas, is certainly most interesting; and it is no less important for the history of general nature to study what man is in his least cultivated state, as when he has reached the highest condition of intellectual improvement; to behold him in woods, as well as in cities. But a task so extensive is beyond the limits of the present undertaking; and nations in their most advanced periods alone can be examined. Instead then of looking minutely, still less exclusively, into the burning deserts of Africa, the gardens of Asia, or the forests of early Europe, information shall rather be sought in the cities of Babylon and Persepolis; in the empire of Xerxes and Darius; among the builders of the stupendous pyramids; and, above all, in the republics of Lycurgus, Solon, and Romulus. But still greater sources of instruction are to be found in the vast empires of modern eras, so elevated in thought, so mighty in power, so peopled with improvement. These in particular shall be investigated, not as fractions, but as masses; not as pro-

vinces, but as states ; not as cities, but as kingdoms. The wide view which must be taken of them must not be disturbed by partial anomalies ;—we should not estimate the ocean by a ripple. Such are the principles on which the inquiry shall be conducted.

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## CHAPTER II.

### ON PRIDE AND VANITY.

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#### PART I.

On the Causes which develop and modify Pride and Vanity.

THE casualties which chequer human life are so multiplied, that little time can be allotted to examine them as they pass; and we are hurried on from event to event without leisure to study their influence upon our characters and tempers. Yet how much might not the simplest occurrences teach mankind; and what a fund of instruction is lost, because so many allurements engage us to slight the present and the past, and anxiously to look forward to the hours which are to come!

To persons, however, who do take the trouble of examining past occurrences, it soon becomes evident that no one of them is entirely indifferent to us; that all of them have, in some degree, acted upon our minds, and have imparted some pain or pleasure to our recollection. Let any human creature ponder on any of his past thoughts, words, or actions, and he will be convinced that, if they have left any trace upon his memory, that trace must be accompanied either by approbation or by disapprobation.

But, so complicated are the relations of humanity, that it is almost impossible that any recollection can be accompanied exclusively by pure self-approbation or pure self-disapprobation. Nothing short of absolute perfection could ensure the former; nothing but the total absence of good could lead to the latter; and both are foreign to the nature of man. The most common result then, when we ponder upon any past transaction, is a mingled sentiment of approbation and of disapprobation. A murderer, filled with remorse for the atrocity of his crime, may yet delight in its

ingenuity. A man who is gratified by the praise he receives for an act of benevolence, may yet censure himself for the motive from which it has proceeded.

Neither is this all which a little self-examination may teach us. Let any man conscientiously and calmly ask himself what his feelings are after he has done an act of moral and intrinsic worth; and let him make the same inquiry, after one which is merely showy and superficial. He will find that, in the former case, his self-approbation is more elevated, and more satisfactory; that it proceeds from a monitor placed within his own bosom, and that it is independent of the opinions or the applause of other men. In the latter case, he will feel that, whether his internal monitor approve of him or not, his greatest satisfaction must come from the judgment of the world; and that, until he has been paid in plaudits, he has not received the recompense due to his performance.

To whatever object the inquiry be directed, whether to the most important or to the most frivolous concerns of life, to those which occur every hour, or to those which are the rarest in our existence, the same law governs this feeling; and self-approbation is always more noble and dignified in proportion as the source from which it arises is more intrinsically worthy.

Two modifications of this sentiment then exist in our hearts; the one resulting from actions which, whatever other qualities they possess, must be intrinsically meritorious; the other from actions which, whether of intrinsic merit or not, must attract the eyes of the world.

Language possesses no accurate denomination to express these two modifications of self-approbation. The words which approach the nearest to the present meaning are pride and vanity; yet their usual acceptation is so remote from it, that they cannot be applied without some previous observations.

No sentiment which God has bestowed on man can be primarily injurious; neither is there one of which an ill use cannot be made. Pride and vanity, when in due keeping and proportion with the ends to which they are destined,

are as fair and laudable feelings as any that dwell in the human heart. Nay, they are indispensable ingredients of the character; for, without the one, it would be deficient in dignity; without the other, we should want many of the motives which draw us toward our fellow-creatures, and make society a necessity. The man who has none of either would soon sink beneath his proper level; and he who has too much of them would aspire to rise above it.

It is with this restriction that the words pride and vanity are here to be understood. They shall be employed without any reference to praise or censure, and merely to denote any degree of self-approbation which may justly arise out of any recollection. A proud man is used in this essay in the sense of one who feels this just degree of pride; and a vain man, of one who feels a just degree of vanity.

From these statements, it is evident that the simple fundamental faculties upon which pride depends, are conscience, reason, and self-esteem—faculties by which alone we can judge of the intrinsic value of moral or intellectual actions, and which alone can make men independent.

Vanity is independent of the intrinsic merit of its cause. The powers which appreciate this, then, are not its necessary elements. But the object which excites it must be brilliant; it must shine in the eyes of the world. Without the approbation of the world, vanity cannot exist.

From this it clearly follows that we are perpetually exposed to feel pride or vanity—either gratified or wounded; and that it is impossible for us long to abstract ourselves from their influence. The operations which produce them are often imperceptible to our minds. Yet they proceed as surely and as constantly as any of the secretions of our body, which are performed without our consciousness.

An example will throw some light upon this assertion. We are told in Grecian history that an inhabitant of a city, which Philip of Macedon had taken by storm, presented himself to the conqueror, boasting that the dexterity which he had acquired in throwing a grain of millet seed through the eye of a needle was such, that he never failed. The king ordered him to be rewarded with a bushel of millet

seed, that he might never be without the instruments of his art. Now, what must have been the feelings of this mountebank in the complicated relations in which he stood, before the monarch, the public, and himself?

The talent which he possessed could not have been acquired without labour and perseverance, two things which may well excite the approbation of reason and conscience. Thus far, then, his pride may have been gratified; but, on the other hand, it must have been abated by the extreme frivolity of the acquirement. The applauses of those before whom he exhibited his dexterity must have excited his vanity; neither did anything tend to diminish it as long as he did not carry his pretensions too high. The sarcastic present of the monarch, however, must have awakened him to a due sense of his insignificancy and folly in having spent so much time and labour to so little purpose. In this respect, then, his pride was wounded; but as the present and reproof of the monarch were public, public admiration must have been diminished; and then his vanity also must have suffered. Hence, then, the complication of sentiments which this man experienced was great, and his pride and his vanity underwent frequent alternations of gratification and of pain.

This example suffices to shew how rarely it can happen that any event of our lives is so abstracted from adventitious circumstances, as to excite only one of the modifications of self-approbation without the other. The noblest source of pride is virtue, yet, should virtue be made a subject of display, it may become a source of vanity. In the same manner, should an object which, in its abstract nature, would be a source of vanity, be acquired by meritorious exertion, or applied to valuable ends, the sentiment arising from these fortuitous considerations may become the predominant feeling. The following illustrations may tend to elucidate this subject.

Among the sources of pride arising from intellectual exertion are abstruse researches, deep contemplation, the acquirement of those branches of knowledge which cannot be attained without protracted study and perseverance.

The lighter occupations of fancy more frequently create vanity. Yet a philosopher may be so much applauded as to yield to the seductions of vanity, and a poet may have laboured so intensely as to become proud of his muse. Pedantry is the pride, not the vanity of learning, were it for no other reason but that it usually belongs to minds which acquire with difficulty.

Personal qualifications follow the same law. Beauty is a natural gift, attained by no labour, and accompanied by no advantage, except that of exciting admiration. Strength, on the contrary, though equally a boon of nature, is of real value to the possessor, and has an importance independent of opinion. The obvious tendency of the former is to excite vanity, while the latter gives rise to pride. Should strength, however, be made an object of display, as it is by all who exhibit extraordinary feats, it may beget vanity. This, indeed, was not the sentiment experienced by Pepin le Bref, when, in the presence of his court, he entered the lists to combat a lion and a bull. Pepin was not a gladiator but a warrior and a usurper, and the applause of the public was the meed which he sought. The smallness of his stature had often been a topic of derision, and he was desirous of proving to his subjects that, little as he was, he could perform what not one among them dared to attempt. The triumph of Nero in a Roman theatre excited the vanity of that emperor; the triumph of Pepin was a source of pride.

The adventitious gifts of fortune, wealth, honours, ancestry, create pride or vanity, according to the circumstances which accompany them. Of all the modes of attracting the attention of the multitude, the most certain is riches. It is, then, the abstract nature of wealth to create vanity. But wealth may devolve to the possessor by the easy mode of inheritance, or it may be the fruit of his industry, it may be lavished on objects of parade and ostentation, or devoted to more useful purposes, and to nobler ends; and the sentiment of self-approbation which it creates is modified accordingly.

The pride of ancestry is not a more accurate expression

than the pride of riches. As no merit or effort of men can add a single generation to the list of their forefathers, they have little cause to be proud of high birth ; but, as high birth is usually accompanied by wealth, titles, power, by all that attracts attention and admiration, it has a tendency to create vanity. When deprived of these indeed, as ancestry has nothing in itself which blazons out its value to the world, its consequence is pride. Persons who have been stripped of hereditary honours, or who have lost the means of supporting them, have no longer reason to be vain of them ; but, feeling the situation to which they are reduced, and recollecting that from which they have fallen, they generally become proud.

Every object, even the most frivolous, becomes more nearly allied to pride than to vanity, in proportion as the right to possess it, or the power of attaining it, is contested. Thus dress is generally a source of vanity ; but a person reduced from opulence to ruin may attach to dress a feeling of pride, when he endeavours to maintain in the world an appearance corresponding to his former situation. A sentiment of decency is in every case connected with pride.

Ostentation, in its strict sense, is vanity ; yet the thing of which a display is made, may in itself be a motive of pride, as has already been remarked of virtue ; nay, pride itself may be a motive of vanity, as in the case of a man who, having acted with becoming pride, proclaims to the world that he has done so ; or, in other words, a man may be vain of his pride ; but no man ever was proud of his vanity. We do not fear to let the world know how highly we value the awards of conscience ; but we are ashamed to own, even to ourselves, that, having once attained the approbation of so competent a judge, we can stoop to court an inferior authority.

Diogenes was perhaps sincere in the cynical habits which he assumed through life ; and, if so, the leading feature of his character was pride. But the parade which he made of his independence shewed him to be no less vain. He was ostentatious of his poverty, as other men have been of their wealth ; and he was moreover vain of his pride.

When Cicero had protected the Roman republic against Catiline, he must have felt the highest satisfaction which a statesman can experience from the approbation of conscience. But, “*Oh, fortunatam natam me consule Romam!*” was one of the most pitiful exclamations of vanity, which the flattering applause of the multitude ever extorted from the mouth of a great man.

Mankind too often appreciate causes by their effects. Success may attend very feeble and ill-directed efforts, while means the most competent to attain their ends may sometimes miscarry; yet he who succeeds is generally more admired in the world than he who fails. Success, therefore, is a necessary aliment to vanity, while pride can exist without it; for, if we have laboured to our utmost to deserve it, we have done all that is requisite to satisfy reason and conscience. Thus it is that he on whom the world confers a recompense for labours not his own is vain, for all the success was his; while he for whose labours another is rewarded is proud, for his was all the merit.

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## PART II.

### On the Development of Pride and Vanity in the Human Character.

PRIDE and vanity are innate sentiments, that is to say, the elements of which they are composed—reason, conscience, the desire of our own approbation, the desire of the approbation of others, are born within us. The propensity to these feelings varies in different men, in proportion as their elements are by nature more or less active. Some are born with a greater tendency toward pride, while they in whom the wish to be approved of by others is stronger than reason, conscience, or self-esteem, are more addicted to vanity.

The sentiment which earliest predominates in a character is generally that which continues to prevail until the end of life. Sometimes, however, it is diminished or increased, or even altered; and there seems to be a particular course of events which modifies self-approbation according to one common law.

A helpless infant is an object of general anxiety, and excites the interest of a greater number of persons than a being of any other age can engross. He is fondled, caressed, and indulged by all who approach him. Every smile is applauded, every infantine grace is repaid by some mark of endearment. The first step he makes is admired, the first word he utters is anxiously repeated. He is idolised by his parents, and monopolises the solicitude of the fond circle which surrounds him. Nothing yet has taught him that, on every side, there is a world containing many millions like himself, who are the little centres round which the affections of friends are alike busied, and he still imagines himself alone created to occupy the attention of all. What is most valuable in human nature is not yet developed in him, and the best return he can make is only hope and promise. Such a situation has many things to excite vanity, while pride can find but few motives in so weak and imperfect a state.

As this being attains strength, and stands less in need of the assistance of others, a portion of the attention eagerly bestowed upon his first moments is gradually withdrawn. He begins to mix with creatures who are upon the same footing as himself, and who claim an equal share of solicitude. The little arts and allurements, which procured him indulgence in his earlier years, grow daily out of season. The first disappointment which he experiences in the favours and blandishments that early habits had led him to consider as his due, teaches him that he must look for support in his own breast, and gives him the first impression of pride which he derives from adventitious circumstances.

Still, however, and long after he has reached an adult age, youth, and all the charms which accompany it, are motives strong enough to keep alive much vanity, although the moral to be drawn from the lesson of every hour is, that every man must find his chief support within himself.

But the true season of pride is the age of perfect manhood, of maturity both in mind and body. Then it is that every individual is raised to the highest degree of independence which his faculties can attain, and can contribute to



the good of others as much as they can contribute to his. At this season, too, greater sacrifices are expected; the moral duties are more severe, and men cease to substitute their hopes in the place of reality. Repeated failures render them indifferent to the applause, and, in some measure, to the judgment of others, and destroy their anxiety to obtain approbation. Every disappointment from public opinion, every supposed injustice of mankind induces them to seek, in their own breasts, a compensation for the illusions of a feeling which the world has refused to gratify.

And even among those who have succeeded to the utmost of their hopes; whom fortune has loaded with her most precious favours; whom crowds have admired; who have worn the rich trappings of state; who, by the power of their eloquence, have raised or calmed the fury of multitudes; who have returned from the field of battle preceded by the song of victory, how few there are who find in public applause the satisfaction which they expected to receive, and do not soon discover that to reap no higher reward for virtue than the frail admiration of men, would be too inadequate a recompense for a life of toil and privation?

The further these inquiries are pursued, the stronger must be the conviction that, in the progress of life from infancy to mature age, the general and natural tendency of self-approbation in the human character is from vanity to pride; but, if the speculation be carried still further, it will be found that the latter begins to abandon us, as soon as the strong hour of maturity is past, and old age has commenced its ravages upon our weak and perishable natures.

As soon as we begin to glide down the sad declivities of life, the loss of those qualities of which we once were proud makes us rather objects of compassion to others, than of satisfaction to ourselves. As we return toward the state of weakness from which we once emerged, we are compelled to feel that our day of pride is past, and all that can remain is but a reminiscence of that sentiment founded upon a life well spent. But if we still possess the vigour and the freshness of youth; if we are remarkable for any of the qualities, unusual in old age, though common at an early period; if

we excite the admiration of our hearers, when we recount the adventures of our younger days, our hearts may still expand to the opinion of the world, and we may feel a return of vanity ; but even this sentiment can hardly follow us unabated to the grave. Increasing debility warns us every day that a period of helplessness is at hand, from which death is our sole refuge. We know, too, that, at the last, the moment must come when both pride and vanity shall cease, and self-approbation stand at best on doubtful grounds, while we await our sentence from the most awful of all tribunals.

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### PART III.

On the Reaction of Pride and Vanity on the Human Character.

To appreciate the reaction of pride and vanity upon the human character, it is sufficient to consider the elements of which they are composed.

The reflective powers are the highest authorities to which intellect can appeal. The moral sense is a faculty which the Divinity has bestowed upon us in order that we may be able to judge of our own conduct. The highest powers, then, mental and moral, control self-esteem in pride, and make it rational and just.

When these elements are in the best proportion, pride approaches the nearest to perfection. Any one of them may acquire undue influence, but the most liable to become excessive is self-esteem. When this feeling is so strong as to obtain the mastery, the vices of pride are extreme ; even conscience may be perverted, when reason is not sound, but while reason prevails, there is less danger from its abuses, than from those of self-esteem.

When the desire to be approved of by others appeals to the conscience and reason of estimable judges, vanity partakes a little in the qualities of pride. It does not, however, possess the independence of the latter ; an independence which nothing but self-esteem can confer. When it makes no appeal to their conscience or reason, it is deprived of all

that can give it real worth or stability, and becomes the sport of the motley herd of which the world is composed.

The opinions of men are most contradictory respecting these modifications of self-approbation, for some attribute all the ills of this earth to pride, while others impute them to vanity; and the animosity of the vain toward the proud can be equalled but by the contempt which the proud feel for the vain. But these opinions are unjustly pronounced, and the only way to attain certainty is to examine, on a general scale, in what degree and manner pride and vanity can contribute to make men great, good, wise, and happy.

A quality peculiar to reason and conscience is this; that, however depraved and perverted they may be, they seldom dwindle into insignificancy. The errors of conscience result from rebelling against what is best and greatest; a crime incompatible with a little mind; and even when proud men become impious, they do not become mean. But to a mind over which reason and conscience have no sway, greatness is indifferent. Vanity, it is true, may prompt men to act greatly or to speak greatly; because to do either may attract applause. But it is incapable of making them feel greatly, or think greatly, or of filling the breast with that habitual greatness which is known only to self. Great deeds may belong to either modification of self-approbation; but greatness of soul is an attribute of pride alone.

In all that relates to moral goodness, the superiority of pride is still more decided. Good actions are less proper subjects of display than great actions. The virtues in which vanity delights are optional, rather than obligatory; for, in performing the good which men are not bound to perform, they may be praised for having made a meritorious choice between right and wrong. In all cases, the actions which vanity inspires must be held separate from the effects which similar actions, when connected with pride, produce upon the mind. Thus, as the former may long pursue a habit of great deeds, without imparting greatness to the character, so it may inspire virtuous actions, without making virtuous men. On the other hand, it has the advantage, dearly bought, indeed, of tolerating the commission of ill,

without communicating the deepest tints of depravity to the soul. In one single instance it seems, unfortunately, exempt from this law: the mind of the vain man, accustomed to little thoughts and actions, becomes completely narrowed.

The most elevated parts of wisdom belong to pride: but, pride would too often content itself with collecting stores of knowledge, which would lie buried in the mind that possessed them, if the desire of applause, or, at the least, of esteem, did not sometimes impel the man of genius to share its treasures with mankind; and a proper degree of vanity is useful in introducing talent into public notice. Pride may be compared to the sun which ripens the plant in silence; vanity to the breeze, which spreads its fragrance through the world.

It is easy to deduce the manner in which happiness, that point to which all human thoughts converge, is modified by pride and vanity. The satisfaction which the former receives is of the highest order; but its agonies also are extreme. In its intercourse with men, it suffers little, unless from those whose opinions it holds as a second conscience. When its self-esteem so much exceeds its reason and conscience as to make it assume infallibility, it receives its punishment rather from the errors in which it has persisted, than from mankind; and when it has been made miserable by any fault of its own, it can hope for no consolation from the world. Vanity never procures such elevated happiness as pride; but it is the busy caterer of minor enjoyments, which it abundantly and complacently scatters before our feet. Its privations, however, follow very closely upon its enjoyments. Both lie circumscribed within a narrow compass; and its disappointments and its consolations are ever proximate and ever fleeting. Its anxiety for universal approbation makes it desire to put all around it in good humour; and this contributes to the petty satisfaction of every individual whom its petulance does not offend.

The enjoyments which the vain man covets he seeks within the compass of the passing moment; in the evanescent pleasures which come without trouble, and depart without pain. He finds them profusely diffused through the phy-

sical world, and collects, without exertion, whatever can contribute to his gratification, while he pushes aside with dexterity whatever is disagreeable or offensive. The happiness which must be won by toil ceases, in his mind, to be desirable; for the labour of the pursuit has wearied out expectation, before success comes to gratify it. But the blessings which the proud man thinks worthy of him are not the business of a transient hour; nor, in the midst of agony and woe, would he exchange the elevated and dangerous sensibility which racks him, for the tranquil pleasures and indifference which throng around vanity, and shelter it from pain.

The voyage of vanity in quest of happiness is the excursion of a summer's day. The bark which it freights is light and airy, launched upon a clear and beautiful stream. The even current of the waters in which it floats bears it along, without a necessity of thought, without a waste of present enjoyment in retrospection or expectancy. Pleasure succeeds to pleasure, and gratification is followed by gratification. Yet, even in the most favourable supposition, it may be asked, Where will this exquisite voyage terminate? whither does it tend? and what are to be its results?

The ship which pride has equipped goes in quest of a distant treasure, and is often assailed by tempests and by currents. Yet, in despite of every opposition, they who have energy enough to conduct it safe amid dangers, return home to enjoy in tranquillity the fruit of their labours, and take repose when every care is past.

Pride universally leads to extremes; vanity pursues a constant course of mediocrity. The one sinks deeply into the moral constitution, and the traces which it leaves are never obliterated. The other runs lightly along, and smoothes the surface over which it glides.

From these premises conclusions have been diversely drawn. They who maintain that the sum of ill preponderates over the sum of good diffused through the world, conceive vanity to be the golden mean of conduct, as its mediocrity may keep us clear of extreme evil. They who hold an opposite opinion, extol pride, as the mental vigour.

which accompanies it, may help us to reach the extreme good to which our nature is already prone.

But, setting aside the gloomy systems which degrade, and the more cheering ones which flatter human nature, it is undeniable that the design of creation, and the will of infinite benevolence, would be ill answered if the sum of good did not very much exceed the sum of evil in the world. Extremes are ever foreign to the nature of man; but, if a line were drawn, equally separating the good and the bad, the very great majority of human interests would be found to be upon the better, the smaller number on the worse side of that boundary. In exact proportion as each person agrees with this doctrine, will his opinion coincide with the following: that the first balance of advantages and disadvantages which the modifications of self-approbation confer upon mankind, is very much in favour of pride.

#### CONCLUSION.

Almost the only sentiment from which it is impossible for any man to abstract himself, is self-approbation, together with its opposite feeling, self-disapprobation. Pride and vanity, therefore, whether gratified or wounded, are the agents which are most incessantly modifying the characters of men.

Upon these grounds, and with the import of the terms as explained in the preceding pages ever present to the mind, it is evident that mankind may be divided into two great classes, the proud and the vain, subject to infinite modifications, according to the degrees and species of these sentiments which enter into every mind. But what is applicable to individuals, is equally true of communities; and the same principle of classification may be applied to nations. Every nation, then, like every man, belongs to the proud or to the vain, subject also to infinite modifications.

It remains now to generalize these inquiries; to investigate the causes which give rise to the pride or vanity of

nations ; to consider the mode in which they contribute to influence the characters of empires, to regulate their political institutions, to govern their actions in peace and in war ; in a word, to make them such as observation shows them to be at this moment, and such as history represents them to have been in the remotest ages of which any record is preserved.

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## CHAPTER III.

### ON THE PRIDE AND VANITY OF NATIONS.

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#### PART I.

On the Causes which develop and modify the Pride and Vanity of Nations.

THE pride and vanity of nations are governed by the same general laws which modify the pride and vanity of individuals.

Amid the many difficulties which attend an inquiry into these subjects, it is some consolation to know that, on certain sides, they are assailable ; and that, in proportion as the circumstances upon which national character depends are subject to the control of men, their investigation becomes more easy.

Among the earliest natural causes of national character is climate—a cause which has many advocates, and many opponents. Two modern authors, in particular, of great and deserved reputation, may be considered as the chief supporters of opposite systems ; the one allowing to climate a very extensive power of modifying human dispositions and propensities, the other adducing many examples to prove that its effects are very limited.

The first of these is Montesquieu, whose opinions merit the highest deference ; from whose writings nations might learn how far they are suited to their governments, and their governments to them ; and of whose principles the history of a late period in his own country might serve as a demonstration, if his strong reasoning had not been sufficient to banish doubt from every thinking mind.

According to the doctrine of this author, the characters of nations might become a subject of calculation upon the mere datum of heat and cold ; and their aptitude to various modes of government might be measured by the thermometer




alone. He considers the whole frame of man to be a machine composed of unorganized matter, and takes no account of the principle of vitality which animates its functions.

By the principle of vitality is not meant any principle relating to the voluntary operations of the mind, or to our moral nature in any of its shapes, but merely that principle which presides over the involuntary functions of our existence—which gives the muscles a power of raising a weight, the hundredth part of which would divide and lacerate them if reduced to the state of lifeless fibres—which enables the heart to propel a mass of blood to the extremities of the body, with an effort which it could not resist, if not animated by this principle ; in a word, which holds together the transitory assemblage of elements that compose our frame, and, for a time at least, wages successful war against the corruptive force by which it is finally reduced to dust.

Setting out from the well-known fact of expansion and contraction which pervades the material world, Montesquieu proceeds to consider some of the highest feelings and operations of the mind, such as imagination, taste, sensibility, vivacity, as depending upon them. He states that, when the skin is relaxed by heat, the nerves are expanded and acted upon by the slightest impressions ; but when the skin is contracted, a similar contraction takes place upon the nerves. He adduces an experiment upon a sheep's tongue, which, at the usual temperature of the atmosphere, seemed to be covered with papillæ, interspersed with small pyramids ; but upon which, when exposed to frost, the papillæ had diminished, and the pyramids had entirely disappeared.

The expansion and contraction of the human body, by the variations of temperature which it can support, are very minute, and deductions drawn from unorganized substances are wholly inapplicable. The thermometrical range which matter endowed with animal life can undergo, is circumscribed by the vital functions ; and whether exposed to extreme heat, or benumbed with cold, a healthful mean of temperature is constantly preserved by the processes of animation. The difference of heat between the body of a man almost frozen to death, and that of another just expiring



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the gratifications which it affords or refuses, by the sensations which it excites or allays, that its action upon sentient and reflecting beings is principally to be estimated.

Let a single creature of the human species be suddenly placed in the world, in full possession of all the endowments which usually accompany maturity. The instinctive impulse of his mind, upon feeling that he exists, is to inquire whether the precious gift of life has been accompanied by the means of preserving it. Should he find that these are abundantly lavished around him, no anxiety interrupts his enjoyments, no solicitude about to-morrow disturbs him ; but should he, on the contrary, be surrounded by barrenness, destitute of all that his appetites imperiously demand, he must either sink under the pressure of his wants, or labour to surmount them. If his efforts prove successful, he feels encouraged to persevere, and clings to the fruits of his industry with a force proportioned to his desire of self-preservation. But his attention must not be suspended by success. His thoughts must be busied with the care of providing for a future day, even though he may be under a respite from present necessities ; and, placed between the apprehension that Nature may withdraw her support, and the hope that labour may render it permanent, his life is spent in thought and in anxiety, in care and in exertion.

Whatever be the situation in which man is considered, whether as a solitary or a social being, in a savage or in a civilised state, the instincts of his nature are alike ; and no sooner do human creatures flock together, than the natural wants of individuals become the natural wants of society. Let, then, two neighbouring tribes be supposed to inhabit two districts, separated by a line, such as those which usually constitute boundaries, and, with the single exception that the territory of the one is fertile, while that of the other is less productive, let them be turned adrift to provide as they may for their earliest necessities. It is evident that the former are compelled to less exertion, and that the means of existence may be secured by them at a smaller expense of time, of labour, and of thought. The latter, to attain a like security, must employ a greater share of industry and

reflection. When they succeed, indeed, the success is entirely their own. They owe it, not to the prodigality of Nature, but to the exertion of those faculties with which their Creator had endowed them, and which never are roused into full activity but by the feeling that it is indispensably necessary to use them.

The earliest sentiment of satisfaction which these tribes can know, is derived from the ease or difficulties with which their first wants are supplied; and the self-approbation of the former is directly modified into vanity, while that of the latter immediately becomes pride.

The most efficient mode, then, in which climate can be considered as contributing to form the characters of nations, is as it alleviates the necessities of men by its suitableness to the soil which they inhabit. Though the existence of some other modes of operating cannot be denied, this must be allowed to be the most general and efficacious; and, amid the crowd of causes which seem to act, its superiority must be acknowledged in the same manner as, amid the seeming anomalies of Nature, the universal law which astronomers recognise is gravitation.

It frequently happens, indeed, that fertility is greatest where climate is most agreeable; and the concomitance of these advantages may have been an obstacle to tracing their separate effects. The warmth which increases nervous sensibility multiplies the plants which are destined to be our food, and makes them more delicious; the same benignant sky which cheers our minds, and paints the world with brighter colours, makes labour superfluous: but the cold which benumbs us freezes up the liberal bosom of Nature; and the heavens which to-day are serene, and to-morrow full of tempests, incline us more to apprehension than enjoyment, while they blast, in a moment, the productions which have been mellowing through successive suns.

And here let it be remarked how admirably the effects of climate upon our physical and upon our moral natures are in harmony with each other. Whenever exertion is necessary to overcome the unwillingness of Nature, the very exertion which we have to combat endows the muscles with str

to support a healthful labour; but where a more genial heat awakens a livelier sensibility to external impressions, it is there that the munificence of the Creator most bountifully shows itself, and ‘ makes all Nature beauty to the eye, and music to the ear.’

In this sense climate is not only the earliest, but the most constant cause which acts upon the characters of men, collectively or separately. It gives them their first impulse, and maintains it through successive generations, as fertility contributes not only to the immediate happiness of individuals, but to the more extensive and complicated superiority of empires.

But whatever be the suitableness of soil to climate, no fertility can make a nation great, unless it extends over a sufficient territory, and many fields must be united before national splendour can be attempted.

The extent of territory necessary to this end is wholly relative, and varies according to the condition of society, and the strength of neighbouring empires. A tribe consisting of a hundred families might, in some cases, be most powerful, but it would soon be annihilated if surrounded by the mighty states of modern Europe.

Territory influences the characters of nations, 1st, by its extent; 2dly, by the manner in which it has been acquired; 3dly, by the uses to which it is applied; 4thly, by the nature of its boundaries, as contributing to its security.

Extent of territory is one of the first elements of national power and splendour. It might then make nations either proud or vain. But as both power and splendour are naturally its consequences, and the result of less effort in proportion as the territory is more extensive, it seldom makes them proud; and it is always the less inclined to do so when to extent is joined fertility, with all its consequences, wealth, populousness, and easy enjoyments.

2dly. Empires that have acquired their territory by peaceful and easy means of aggrandizement, as negotiations, marriages, inheritance, &c., derive more vanity than pride from their possessions; while they who, by toil and labour, by unremitting military exertions and difficult conquests,

have spread the limits of their power, are more usually proud of their acquisitions.

3dly. When conquests won with ease and rapidity constitute the glory, rather than the solid good of a nation—when they may be ranked among the superfluities of national splendour, they create vanity; but when they are necessary—when they secure a spot in which men exist who have no choice but to be victorious or to perish, and to whom increase of territory is almost as indispensable as food, then indeed extent of territory may become a motive of pride. When extensive territory is used as the means of further aggression and licentious conquest, it gives rise to vanity; but it contributes to pride when held as an instrument of domestic security, and to maintain a balance in the scale of justice. Nations may derive the same sentiment from the smallness of their territory, when the energies of their mind and character have carried their solid prosperity to a height beyond the proportion of their natural means.

4thly. The nature of the boundary contributes to pride or vanity, as it makes nations more or less secure against aggression; as it gives them the consciousness of strength; as it protects them from foreign conquests, and the insults of their enemies; as it increases their spirit of independence. A high and mountainous barrier, and, still more, the ocean, produce this effect in the greatest degree, and contribute more than any other limit to the pride of nations.

Although nothing is more idle than the determination of natural boundaries, yet the portion of ground possessed by one individual or by one community is more properly terminated by a real, than by an imaginary limit; and the barrier which Nature has marked by an elevation or a depression of the soil, deserves a preference over every line which the hand of man can trace. A rivulet may be acknowledged as a just boundary to the field or garden belonging to a single family; but should that family become more numerous and powerful, a similar reason may assign another rivulet a little more remote as the limit of its possession. In like manner, with every accession of numbers and power, there may be an accession of territory; and

although a line of defence is the most natural limit, the relative strength and populousness of families must determine whether the nearest or the farthest barrier is to bound their property.

It is upon similar principles that nations proceed. Reason may point out a chain of mountains, or a deep and rapid river, as the best natural defence; but what that chain of mountains or that river is to be, whether neighbouring or distant, must be adjusted by the respective force and policy of empires.

Fertility and extent of territory are among the earliest causes which modify the self-approbation of nations; but every other event in their existence has a similar tendency. Civilisation, religion, government, literature, industry, the arts, are perhaps still more powerful agents than soil or climate, in any of their shapes. But nothing of human institution can be considered as a cause, until it has first been examined as a result, as a consequence of the impulse already given to national character. The mind and feeling of a nation must precede its institutions, or where is the power which directs and models them? To attribute them to chance would be too puerile; to call them immediate establishments of Nature would be to render nugatory the general principles by which the world is ruled. It is by laws the most general, the most immutable, the most wise, beneficent, and just, that the characters of nations are governed, that, like the heavenly bodies which move unerringly through boundless space, they preserve the even tenor of their way, amid infinite variety, and never are more true to their first and constant impulses, than when, to us, they seem the most to deviate from them.

Taking now a succinct and general view of the mode in which such natural circumstances as it is in our power to appreciate, act upon the characters of nations; considering men, not merely as individuals, but as united in society, it will be found that soil, climate, territory, boundaries, every thing which constitutes the early natural condition of nations, contribute to make them proud or vain, according to the ease or difficulty with which, by their assistance, national

greatness can be attained. This, indeed, is the noblest end of social progress ; that which men, in their most improved state, pursue with the greatest energy and enthusiasm, and which, when properly felt and understood, is alone sufficient to constitute civilisation. It is the union of individual wishes into one common stock, the preference of the whole to a part ; and it is into this, as into a single point, that the whole bearing of natural circumstances upon the minds of civilised men is summed up. It is the last, as it is the highest feeling of an enlightened heart—the most approved by reason, the most cherished by sensibility—that which ennobles self-approbation, and converts self-interest into generosity.

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## PART II.

On the Development and Progress of Pride and Vanity among Nations.

THE earliest feeling of self-approbation developed in the human race was vanity. The spot where men were first placed was one of the most fertile and delicious of the globe. There they were surrounded with a profusion which concealed from them much of their own weakness, and imposed upon them no task but to enjoy. Labour was not suggested to them by any necessities, and no wants instructed them that there is no situation upon earth which exertion may not improve. They considered the world as a feast spread out before them, and thought their only business was to delight in it. Themselves they considered as objects of the peculiar bounty of Nature, and immediate favourites of partial Providence. It is not, then, surprising that their first feeling of self-approbation should have been vanity.

As generations multiplied and were diffused over less hospitable regions ; as new difficulties arose and were subdued ; as the species became improved and intellect was cultivated, this sentiment abated ; a larger portion of pride was introduced into the human character, and the creation



of new empires has spread it over the globe, in a ratio almost commensurate with the increase of rational beings.

The very first countries settled into monarchies were indeed too much like the fertile garden of Eden ; and the whole history of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes, Persians, Arabians, down to the present hour, affords no picture but of vanity. Nay, even while men had reached no farther than the borders of the Nile, they remained within the native regions of that sentiment. Yet the overflowing of that river was a difficulty most proper, at first, to damp, though afterwards to stimulate, the ardour of an inexperienced people. Tremendous in its first appearance and effects, spreading devastation all around it, and overwhelming human habitations in a waste of waters, no sooner did it subside than fertility rose out of the ruin, and hope, almost greater than previous despair, succeeded to encourage exertion. The Egyptians, then, if none before them, must have known pride. But their disasters lasted only for a time ; their exertions were not necessarily constant ; a short season of labour secured their annual provisions, and the climate invited them to indolence. The productions which they enjoyed appertained to the luxuries, more than to the necessities of life, and a large portion of vanity still adhered to their character.

The eastern coast of the Mediterranean was particularly fertile ; and in the country lying between the Jordan and the sea, a nation whom captivity had not taught to reflect, whom a desert had not made wise, completed the disposition which it had imbibed in other regions. One of the vainest people of the world were the Jews, and their vanity moreover derived a peculiar complexion of obstinacy, from the confidence which they had in the care of Providence, from the belief that they were the favoured children of God. Their levity, inconstancy, bad faith, and cruelty, were the vices of vanity ; and their fall was attended with events which never could have occurred, if pride had held its proper place in their character.

The vast peninsula of Africa did not much augment the

stock of human pride. Its soil, indeed, was far from being as generally fertile as that of Asia ; nay, some portions of it were quite unproductive. Its excessive heats, its parched and barren sands, were powerful antagonists to industry ; but Nature, though generally sparing there, was, when productive, profuse in luxuries. To the African, labour promised less success than to the inhabitants of warm countries in general, and he had overcome no difficulties of which he could be proud.

It was upon the northern shores of that vast gulf which separates the Egyptians, the Carthaginians, and the Moors from the continent now the most improved of the world, that the human character was still more altered. Early Europe was covered with forests ; Greece once was as Germany was at a much later period, or as Canada in modern times. Such obstacles as forests, however, did not, like natural barrenness, promise to be permanent, but were rather prognostics of abundance. When the woods were removed—when the sun had power to exert his influence, the luxuriance of the soil became too evident not to inspire vanity. But that sentiment was there very unlike what it was in Asia, and still more in Africa. Its principal characteristic was activity, and, above all, mental activity. As mind was perpetually called upon to lend its assistance, the Greeks paid greater honours to it than any of their predecessors had done ; they never allowed their faculties to become enervate ; they improved and elevated their entire nature ; and they were led to the most brilliant achievements of every kind. Thus was vanity modified into a better feeling, and blended with a larger proportion of pride than had been hitherto known. Thus, too, was founded the splendour of the first European nation which rose to a high rank in social improvement, and which, small as it was, did more to shed lustre on the species than all that had yet been attempted in the country which was the cradle of its infancy.

It is only when compared with their predecessors among nations, however, that the Greeks can be considered as proud. In relation to modern Europeans they were vain, because the permanent difficulties of natural situation are greater in

almost all the rest of this continent than in Greece. The Greeks, too, have been considered as forming one nation, without any distinction of Athenian, Lacedæmonian, or Theban, because the features which diversified the characters of these states were derived less from natural circumstances than from institutions. The predominant feature of Grecian disposition was vanity, and the provinces of Greece which made no attempts to alter that sentiment, as Attica for instance, did but obey the direct law of Nature, while Sparta, by a forced deviation from it, was violently turned aside from its natural bias.

The early natural circumstances of Italy were, in many respects, like those of Greece. Yet one of the proudest nations which ever existed sprung up in the central regions of that fertile peninsula, and gave proof of the most extraordinary perseverance in a sentiment contrary to that to which it would have been inclined by every impulse received from natural situation, had that been allowed to act alone.

The Romans, settling in a warm and fertile country, had nothing to apprehend from the poverty of Nature; but they had to contend with greater difficulties than are experienced by nations placed in absolute scarcity. With the exception of famine, indeed, everything seemed to oppose their very existence, and they were forced to toil and labour by arms for a spot of ground to live upon. The smallness of their numbers made the contest difficult, and imposed the necessity of being uninterruptedly victorious. After the building of the city, while they were acquiring dominion over some of the most delightful provinces of Europe, and spreading far their growing power, their pride was constantly receiving aliment from their daily exertions, and the persevering ardour with which they followed the career of arms. When Cincinnatus left his plough to command an army of citizens marching against the Equi, he felt, as every Roman did, that the existence of his country depended as much upon that enterprise as upon the return which harvest might make to his labours. Though, in the natural course of things, the care of procuring subsistence is the first and most powerful of stimulants, yet the situation in which

Romulus and his followers had placed themselves, their determination to settle where they did or to perish, altered the common tenor of human feelings in their case, and entailed upon their posterity a series of wants and sentiments to which they would otherwise have remained strangers.

But as national existence became secure, and as the supremacy attained in various countries diminished the urgency of exertion, the influence of soil and climate became apparent, and finally predominated. The principal acquisitions were the most fertile regions of the south and of the east, which put within their reach the indulgences of every climate. Thus, then, their old and their new territory conspired to bring back their national character to what, had it not been for former difficulties, it always would have remained. The only moral advantage which they retained from all their efforts, was the recollection of them ; and this continued to give a grandeur to their mind, even amid the depravity which their successes soon introduced, and the luxury which became easy of attainment. But the true dignity, the elevated pride of Rome perished, as soon as victory had ceased to be an indispensable want ; as soon as wars were undertaken, not for necessary conquests, but from a spirit of licentious aggrandizement, they dwindled into vanity—into that vanity which, ever since, has been unaltered, and of which the foundation had been laid at the very moment when Italy was gifted with the happy soil and climate that prepared it to become the Capua of its own inhabitants. The return of this sentiment there was, in fact, the return of Nature ; and it may safely be affirmed, that pride, unless brought back again by some new violence, has fled from that beautiful and fertile country, never to re-appear there as long as the laws which govern human character remain unchanged.

The vanity of the Greeks became predominant at a much earlier period of their respective histories than the vanity of the Romans. In the plenitude of their greatness the Athenians were vain, but the Romans became so only in their decline. Vanity always was the stimulus of the Greek.

—pride once was the moving principle of the Italians. The Athenians were deficient in many of the great qualities common to the Romans, or possessed them but sparingly; the Romans remained destitute of many accomplishments which were the familiar ornaments of Grecian minds.

But, while both these nations were thus pursuing their course, the rest of Europe was preparing a new career. The history of the northern nations represents them, from the earliest times, as prouder than the south; and there has been no interruption to this law. In the whole existence of the barbarians who rushed from the *officina gentium*, but one circumstance could have made them vain—the facility with which they usually conquered. Accordingly, though proud when they had to contend with Nature, they are frequently vain when their antagonists are men, weaker, less numerous, and more depraved by luxury than themselves. But it is not from barbarians that instruction can best be derived. The most valuable information is to be found among the most improved nations; and the great gap in history, during which all was darkness and ignorance, the chasm which separates ancient and modern civilisation, may be neglected for the periods in which mankind has been the most improved, and of which the surest records have been preserved.

The country of Europe, which, all things considered, unites the largest share of natural advantages, is Spain. In taking the average of soil, climate, fertility, and geographical position, no part of Europe possesses such easy means of national prosperity. Yet these advantages seem, for the most part, to have been bestowed in vain; and the Spanish people, so far from having enjoyed the internal prosperity or the political preponderance to which Nature had entitled them, have hardly been the masters of their own territory since first the Carthaginians drew from it a part of their wealth. One of the most striking facts of European history is, that, during near twenty centuries, Spain has hardly ever been in the unmolested and undivided possession of the Spaniards.

From the first landing of the Carthaginians to the final

expulsion of the Moors, the natives had to contend with all the untoward circumstances of foreign occupation. The actual presence of their enemies, who made them victims and slaves in their own homes, was well suited to check the buoyancy of the self-approbation which natural circumstances would have authorised; and for a time at least both of its modifications were in a state of depression.

But the lessons of adversity are often the most benignant, when they seem the most severe. The depression of vanity sometimes ennobles the feeling. The mind which does not wholly sink under misfortune, rises above it more lofty than before, and is strengthened by affliction.

The condition of the Spaniards, from the first day on which they opposed the incursions of foreign foes, was even more favourable to the conversion of national vanity into pride, than the early situation of the Romans; and it was moreover one which, when the duties which it imposed were fulfilled, would not encourage a relapse. All that they achieved by their conquests was to recover what once was theirs; a less intoxicating exploit than the acquisition of new territory; because, however great and glorious the present triumph may be, it is clouded by the recollection of former defeat. The warlike perseverance of the Spaniards was as conducive to pride as that of the Romans; and their ultimate success was still more proper to maintain it free from vanity. Accordingly, the pride of the Spaniards has been more lasting. It may be found in the very first periods of their known history; when the Carthaginians and the Romans were fighting for the possession of their territory, in the heart of their country; when Roman factions were tearing it to atoms; when a few Spaniards, nobly following the fate of their sovereign, carried the fortunes of the state into the mountains of Asturias; under the long oppression of the Moors; under the greatness of Isabella, Philip, Charles; during the decline which followed the house of Bourbon beyond the Pyrenees, and it burst out anew amid the degradation with which a late ~~flee~~ nasty would have afflicted the country. In ~~th~~ this, however, two things were wanting to ~~ce~~

pride of that nation ; and in these two the Romans were preeminent, political wisdom and liberty.

The natural advantages of Spain would have been fully sufficient to make its inhabitants as vain as those of Gaul, had nothing counteracted their influence. In France a fertile soil and a beautiful climate operated uncontrolled ; and no country possesses so much of that active vanity, which is peculiarly European.

The soil of France, assisted by its fertilising climate, produces with ease and in abundance, not only what is necessary to human existence, but many luxuries of more southern growth. By a fortunate concurrence of local circumstances, that country enjoys the advantages of more warmth than belongs to its geographical position ; and it must not be judged of by mere degrees of latitude. In the productions of the vegetable kingdom, it must be considered as ranking nearer to Spain and Italy, than to Germany, or to any part of Europe, equidistant from the equator. The same circumstances, too, have conferred the warmth which is favorable to nervous excitability ; the steadiness of temperature which gives repose to the mind, the sky which exhilarates, and the sun which disposes to indolence more than to labor.

The territory of France has gradually become so extensive, that national greatness and supremacy are its easy consequences. No people in Europe can be powerful with less difficulty and exertion, than the French.

In acquiring this territory, the French were not compelled, like the Romans, to conquer new dominions ; or, like the Spaniards, to recover their own. The occupation of Spain by its successive invaders, and of a part of France by the English, are not parallel cases. The reconquest of the latter was performed rapidly, and easily, more by the civil dissensions which followed the death of Henry V. in Britain, than by the constancy and exertions of the French. In the recovery of the Maine, Poitou, Anjou, &c., there was less cause for pride, than in the recovery of Castille, Andalusia, and Grenada. Many other provinces too, as Normandy, Brittany, were annexed to France by marriage, inheritance,



&c., and cost no toil or exertion to the nation ; and the conquest of Alsace was too easy, by reason of the territory already acquired, to excite much pride.

The limits by which the territory of France is bounded are not, generally speaking, remarkable for the circumstances which create pride. Some of them, indeed, are strong lines of defence ; but the effect which they might naturally produce, is modified by peculiar circumstances. Thus, on the opposite side of the Pyrenees, is situated a nation from whom the French have rarely had much to apprehend, and the sentiment which might arise from the strength of this barrier is lost, in consideration of the habitual weakness of Spain. Opposite to the western limit, on the contrary, is an island, whose usual superiority by sea must check the pride which France might otherwise derive from that strong frontier. Thus, much of the bias which the French character might receive from her lines of defence, is altered by local circumstances.

The uses to which the greatness of France has been applied are perfectly analogous to the facility with which it was acquired. Her easy acquisition of power has made her prodigal of it, and more inclined to glory than to justice. Success has increased her natural vanity, and the characteristics of this sentiment are most unequivocally expressed in the gaiety and levity of the natives ; in their politeness, often charged with being intrusive ; in their thoughtlessness, and their passion for splendid enjoyments ; in their fickleness and their indifference to great national concerns ; in the constancy with which they follow pleasure ; and in the preference which they too often allow to the point of honor, over more sacred obligations.

Of the remaining parts of Europe, few are placed in a situation to give rise to vanity. Accordingly they are inhabited by men, in whose characters pride has a larger share. The leading feature in German character is pride and it predominates more toward the north, in cold and mountainous regions, than in the south country. The Swiss are proud, because, though at a lower latitude than Champagne or Burgundy,



heavier tax of labour to Nature, than any of the inhabitants of France. The Hungarians, indeed, are vain, because they enjoy great natural privileges of soil and climate. But the Belgians, placed in a soil which though fertile yet requires their constant care, and living under a less genial sky, are less vain than the French, but less proud than the Dutch. The Dutch had every difficulty to contend with, and were obliged to rescue their territory from the elements, as the Romans had conquered theirs from its prior possessors. Nothing ever can relieve them from the perpetual constraint of watching over its preservation, against an enemy that knows no repose. It is impossible for them to have any tincture of vanity. The Swedes and the Danes are proud. Some modifications of vanity, indeed, are occasionally introduced among the upper classes of proud nations, by the premature imitation and affectation of polished manners ; but the people long retain the disposition which natural circumstances communicate to them.

A remarkable exception to the common rule of national character is Russia, a country situated at the proudest extremity of the proudest continent. Yet a very large portion of its population is vain, and this anomaly cannot be the result of accident, or of the influence of a few individuals, as might occur in the smaller nations of Denmark or Sweden. It must be due to some more general cause.

The Russians were long intimately mingled with the nations of Asia, and received from them the first impulse of their social progress. Their situation so far removed toward the pole, made it difficult for them to issue from barbarism by any native effort. Their institutions, habits, government were, for a long time, Tartaric ; and they presented the strange picture of a northern European nation, taking the first lessons of civilisation from very vain barbarians. Their admission into the pale of European states, their participation in the benefits of social improvement, are of recent date ; and they have attained, with unexampled rapidity, a rank and a preponderance in Europe, which a century ago could not have been credited. Upon these principles the character of the Russians was modified ; and

upon these it will persist in being what it is. That people will long feel the effects of their early national education, and still longer will the easily acquired greatness which so many thousands of square miles confer upon them, continue to keep them vain.

It is in a mean latitude, more southern than that of Russia, Sweden, or Denmark, that the proudest, not only of modern European nations is situated; but the proudest perhaps—the Romans even not accepted—that ever has existed in the world. It has just been shown that, by the union of more circumstances than ever conspired to create European vanity, the French are the vainest nation of this quarter of the globe. It will appear now that, by the combination of more powerful sources of pride than ever acted upon any nation, England is the country in which this sentiment has been the most completely developed, and the most generally diffused.

In every nation that now is or ever has been proud, some circumstances, either in its natural situation or in its acquired improvement, have in some degree modified its self-approbation, and tinctured it with vanity. The Romans, for instance, during the season of their greatest pride, could not entirely abstract themselves from the effects of a propitious soil and climate, and the same causes helped to give the Spaniards some vanity even in their proudest period. The Swedes derived much transient glory, too short-lived indeed, and supported by too little permanent exertion to create pride, from the extraordinary qualities of one of their monarchs, and to it they owe some vanity. But, in England, every natural cause has combined in augmentation of pride, without a single national inducement to vanity! and every institution, every accident in her existence, has contributed to maintain it in the highest degree in which it has ever been known among men.

The climate of Britain is far from allowing repose or indolence. The habitual dulness of an English sun, the damp and variableness of the atmosphere are more congenial to the seriousness and apparent melancholy of pride, than to the levity of the opposite sentiment. They invite the

mind to reflection, unknown beneath a purer sky ; and add to the anxiety which a soil not exuberantly productive must inspire. The quantity of labor necessary to make the average territory of England yield as much subsistence as the average soil of France is greater, as is also the chance that the produce may be injured by some accident of climate. This produce, too, consists chiefly in the necessaries of life ; while the luxurious fruits which gratify the palate are enjoyed but by the opulent. With care and attention, indeed, the English succeed in securing indispensable food ; but Nature has placed beyond their common reach many enjoyments which other nations possess.

The territory of the British islands is about half as extensive as that of the smallest empire which ranks beside her in splendour and preponderance ; and the efforts by which the natives have raised their little kingdom to the prosperity which they have long enjoyed, are fully sufficient to awaken their pride.

The manner in which this territory has been extended, and the whole heptarchy, together with Scotland and the adjacent island, united into one kingdom, may also have increased the same sentiment. Many of the seven kingdoms were reduced by conquest, Ireland was subdued, and possession was maintained, not without difficulty. Scotland indeed became united to England by inheritance. But it is less from the mode in which the kingdom was extended at home, that pride was derived, than from the circumstances which attend the countries that she possesses far from her own limits ; and from the nature of her boundaries.

The frontier which confers the greatest security is the ocean. But an empire thus bounded cannot extend its territories as continental states may do. With the latter, every addition becomes an integrant portion of the realm, and facilitates further increase. Although the union of the smaller kingdoms made the conquest of Wales more easy ; though the conquest of Wales promoted the invasion of the sister island, yet all that Britain has acquired beyond her boundary is held upon a different tenure, and moreover the natural tendency of all flourishing and powerful colonies

is to become independent. Thus then England has to contend not only with the jealousy of her neighbours and the alarms of those among whom she settles, but with the dangers and uncertainty of the elements and all the disadvantages of time and space.

The use which England has made of her hard-earned power has confirmed the sentiments which arose during its difficult acquisition. The attention and labour which she must employ to maintain her superiority, have taught her how to use and value it, better than if she had won it by physical means. She knows that it is not a thing to be idly risked, or staked on any hazard of empty ambition; and though her efforts may have brought her back but little of triumphant vanity and splendid ovations, they have given her a large return of conscientious glory and of pride.

The pride of the English then is entirely derived from the obstacles which originally opposed their national aggrandisement; and it is greater than that of any nation which ever has existed, because the disproportion between their original means and the ends obtained, between their soil, climate, fertility, and extent of territory, and the prosperity which they enjoy, is greater than ever yet was effected by the operation of man. Their splendour and superiority,—their own work and not a boon of Nature, are most stupendous. They have been acquired with the utmost difficulty, and are maintained by unremitting exertion.

The characteristics of the pride of the English are their gravity and reserve, which are often mistaken for melancholy; their habitual reflection free from outward show; the value which they set upon domestic happiness, upon solid comforts, upon independence; the steadiness of their serious affections, nay the extravagance and variableness of their whims; the general respect in which religion, morality, and virtue are held; and the little deference paid to the applause of men, if not in unison with the approbation of conscience and of reason.

Without passing the limits of Europe, the ~~stren~~ dence may be found that mere climate, in its ~~strie~~ is not adequate to explain the difference observ

characters of nations. Upon this hypothesis, the qualities which distinguish the French should increase with temperature; and the contrast between England and Spain or England and Italy, should be greater than that between England and the parts of the continent lying in similar latitudes. But the reverse of this is true; for one of the proudest nations that ever has existed, issued from the middle regions of Italy to conquer all around it; and another proud nation inhabits a peninsula, warmer than the warmest provinces of France. England, too, not only is prouder than the adjacent parts of the continent, but than all that lie to the north, as Denmark, Sweden, Russia. Whatever be the action of climate then, other agencies can make it almost imperceptible; or at least can give it the peculiar complexion which constitutes national individuality.

In comparing the past with the present state of the world and of human character, it is evident that pride has progressively increased, not indeed in the countries where men first lived, but in those which have since become inhabited. It is not a change of character in the earliest nations, which has made this modification of self-approbation a predominant feature of later times; but the new circumstances in which human beings have been placed by the multiplication and diffusion of mankind. Asia is unchanged; but Europe has been peopled; and, to the inhabitants of the countries lying near the Euphrates and the Nile, have been added the generations which dwell by the Danube and the Elbe.

Whether pride will yet spread wider or not, depends, not so much upon the tendency of the oldest world, as upon the direction which may be imposed upon later countries. It is however probable that no retrogradation to vanity will ensue; or that, even should civilisation be overthrown in this quarter of the globe, pride should entirely fall along with it. Europeans would not indeed have the same motives for that sentiment as in their present condition. The high development of reason would be wanting to give it the dignity which it now possesses; but the difficulties of nature would still remain. As Asia will not emerge from vanity, Europe will not sink into it; but each, by the same

law of persistency, will be as it began, and as it has continued. It is in large masses of the creation, that the voice of its almighty Author declares itself most audibly.

But another continent, already one of the most interesting habitations of man, has rapidly been rising to eminence under the immediate tuition of Europe; of men transplanted thither from full grown empires and mature societies; and who carried out with them all the dispositions which had long been impressed upon their characters, by the natural and artificial circumstances in which they had lived. Sufficient generations have not yet passed away; the separation from the parent continent has not yet lasted long enough, to obliterate those imbibed dispositions. Yet some conjectures may be allowed upon the modifications which the Americans are likely to receive in their new situation.

The eastern and civilised districts of the new world received inhabitants from the corresponding districts of the old; that is to say, with few exceptions, the north of America was peopled and educated by the north of Europe, and the south by the south. Hence, dispositions more in conformity with the natural circumstances of soil and climate were imported, than if the north had been peopled by the south, and the south by the north. If the natives of England had settled nearer the equator, more time would have been necessary to reduce their character under the law which so different a situation must impose upon it; and the Spaniards, with all their pride, would not have been the properest nation to colonize the northern districts of the United States. Upon the whole, however, there is hardly any portion of America in which natural circumstances do not tend to create more vanity, than was imported into it by the Europeans who settled there. The Portuguese and Spanish possessions are warmer, more fertile, and abound in more luxurious productions, than their respective metropolitan countries. The average of the United States has superior natural advantages to England. Canada indeed is inferior to France, but the influence of France in giving it her character was comparatively short. The pride then

which has been introduced into America does not promise to be durable; and when the influence of descent, and imitation, and recollections shall have ceased, the power of nature will return; and more vanity will predominate than is now perceptible. The United States, the portion of America the least favourable to it, that in which it has received the greatest check from art, are now far distant from the zenith of their power and glory; but both are certain. The seeds of prosperity widely sown there are far from being matured, but they must ripen. With the minds of highly cultivated men, the North Americans are still bound down to many of the labours of infant societies; yet look forward, with more than hope, to the highest pinnacle of civilisation which man is capable of attaining. This condition may help to make pride dwell among them a little longer; but their future greatness is too easy of attainment and too inevitable, their climate too favorable, their soil too productive, their territory too vast, their geographical position too advantageous, not at last to turn their characters toward vanity. Already indeed does this sentiment increase there; and its progress since their independence is evident. The vanity of America however, at least of this part of it, promises to be more like that of Europe than of Asia; active, intelligent, energetic, not soft and indolent. The natural circumstances of the country authorise this conjecture; and it is still farther guaranteed by the education which America has received from the intermediate world.

From what precedes, it appears that the modification of self-approbation which has prevailed the longest, and among the largest portion of mankind, is vanity. The country in which it may be seen in its fullest extent, is southern Asia. Its reign there is undisputed, as it is in Syria, Arabia, Persia, and Hindostan; and even in colder regions, as among the Tartars eastern and western, from the borders of the Caspian sea to the sea of Ochotzk, and the gulph of Corea, where it is rather modified by the addition of physical activity, than checked by the diminution of natural advantages. In Europe, it first assumed a moral



character, and became the stimulant of intellectual energies. In the north of this continent self-approbation, founded first on the removal of greater physical difficulties, and latterly upon higher acquirements of intellect, became modified into pride ; and this sentiment received its fullest development in the nation whose efforts have been the most severe and constant, and whose actual success the most surpasses its original capacity of attaining it.

That vanity was the earliest modification of self-approbation developed in human beings, perfectly harmonises with the wise designs of Providence, for it was indispensable to their preservation and welfare that no obstacles should be presented to their establishment and progress, but such as might be easily surmounted. The most fertile spot upon the globe, that in which with the least labour they could procure what was necessary, was their cradle, in order to attach them to existence by uninterrupted enjoyment. Their inexperience and their weakness, which long made them require the superintendence of an all-wise Creator, were opposed to every feeling of pride. As in the infancy of individuals, so in the infancy of the species, their helplessness, which made men dependent upon a mightier Being, allowed no sentiment but vanity to be awakened. But as they grew to strength and manhood—as they were left to themselves—as they met with difficulties in their path through life, their pride began to expand along with their independence. And this is the feeling which suits the maturity of man and of his race. Should no impediment be placed in his career—should he persevere in his endeavours to become wiser and better—should he build his happiness upon securer grounds, and attach his greatness to the distribution of good, his glory to the promotion of virtue, his enjoyments to the well-being of his fellow creatures—should the sacred perception of morality be still more widely diffused, and the lowest of mankind be admitted into the sanctuary of knowledge, which once seemed to be set apart for the great, this sentiment will still increase. As more solid advantages are secured, and nobler blessings elevate the mind—as men become creatures of a



higher value, they will learn to form a grander estimation of themselves, and attaching dignity to the things which they attain by their moral and intellectual faculties, will continue to become proud in proportion as they become enlightened.

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### PART III.

#### On the Reaction of Pride and Vanity upon the Characters of Nations.

ALTHOUGH the advantages and the disadvantages of pride and vanity may, in some measure, be appreciated by what has been said in the last chapter, yet their influence upon large masses of men is somewhat different from that which they have upon single individuals.

The history of mankind would hardly furnish any proofs that the misfortunes of nations have been produced by pride. In the tendency which this sentiment has to lead to extremes, there is a still greater security in favour of multitudes, than of individuals, that they will escape the extreme of evil; while the mediocrity of vanity is more proper to engender the petty ills which so much lower the general standard of human good. A small proportion of men may, by the abuse and the excess of pride, become monsters, without doing a material injury to the community, or perceptibly degrading its average morality; but no human society in which this sentiment was fully perverted could subsist for an hour.

The greatest reverses which nations have experienced may be traced to the action of vanity, and to the absence of pride. It was the vanity of the Jews which reduced them to the state of captives in Egypt, and made them regret their delivery, because the land of promise could be reached only by passing through a wilderness, in which they did not foresee that Providence would still support them. It was their vanity which made them, at all times, restless and unsteady, unsettled in their religious belief, inclined to

idolatry, incapable of good government ; insomuch that the Almighty who had “ given them kings in his anger, took them away in his wrath,” and delivered them up to unbridled anarchy. It was their vanity which brought on their ruin, attended by more shocking circumstances than ever accompanied the fall of so small a nation, and drove them from under the ruins of their city to wander through the globe with the curse of heaven. It is the vanity of Asia which, for five thousand years, has prevented its progress, and condemned it to perpetual stagnation. It was the vanity of the Athenians which induced them to maintain the law that consecrated the funds destined to pay for their pleasures, when war was thundering at their gates ; which made them deaf to the reproaches of Demosthenes, insensible to his eloquence, when he attempted to arouse them by the recollection of Marathon ; which brought them finally under the yoke of Philip, and swallowed up their name and their existence in the Macedonian empire. It was when vanity returned to Rome, that Marius, Sylla, Cæsar, and Octavius made themselves masters of the republic, and changed the government which Brutus, Cato, Fabius had maintained ; that Catiline conspired ; that the people was decimated ; that Attila trampled upon the necks which never since have risen from the ground, and swept away in torrents of Roman blood the trophies which, during two thousand years, had been collecting in the capital of the world. It was the vanity of the Grecian emperors and their subjects, with its vices, which made them a prey to Tartars, whose vanity was at least more warlike than theirs. It was the same sentiment which, making the Poles so blind and restless, so ignorant of their own concerns and interests, so petulant and unstable, inflicted upon them the division of the kingdom, and the subversion of the throne ; both of which would have remained intact, were it possible for folly to be separable from vanity. It is the vanity of the French which, by making them precipitate, rash, overbearing in success—prodigal of their strength—more sensible to glory than to good, has exposed them to greater reverses and more sudden vicissitudes of fortune, than become a

nation of such extent and power. It is vanity which, at this hour, prevents the progress of Russia in the line of social improvement which nature has marked out, and which, if a return to natural impulses be not speedily embraced, will make it sink in vice, before it is mature in civilisation. It was pride, on the contrary, which once raised and supported the Roman name ; which gave energy to Sparta ; which has maintained the steady progress and renown of Britain, and all that has made her great, good, and wise for ages, and promises still to keep her so ; which has placed the mass of Europe in a state so different from Asia, and raised it so far above the ancient continents. It is to pride that the New World must hope to owe its best success, as it does all that it has already obtained ; for not even the active vanity of Europe can be so profitable to it. In a word, the best progress which nations have made, together with the best which they can expect to make, is the result of pride ; while the regions that have laboured under vanity are those which have effected the slightest advances towards social improvement, in all its departments.

This view of the subject is different from that which might be taken upon a hasty examination ; for, at first sight, the most easily attained prosperity, and the most secure enjoyments seem to be preferable. But this is a delusion, for the principle which raises a small and barren country to power, and enables it to vie with the richest and the most extensive, is of a higher order than the mere luxuriance of soil and climate. It is a moral and an intellectual principle ; and when nature, by withholding the immediate means of easy prosperity, stimulates mankind to thought and ingenuity, she does more in favor of their real good, than when she places them in the midst of lavish fertility. A nation which feels that, between greatness and annihilation, there is no intermediate situation in which it may repose, struggles to maintain its power unimpaired ; while empires which, from the summit of splendor and prosperity, can descry a situation where they can relax a little, without danger of ruin, are more ready to sacrifice some of their ascendancy, for luxury, pleasure, and debility.

One important truth is the consequence of what precedes: the most advantageous situation in which human creatures can be placed, is that in which they are surrounded by superable difficulties. Where there are no difficulties, there is no stimulus to exertion; where difficulties are insuperable, there is no hope of success. But a due ratio between the impediments opposed to national progress, and the means of removing them—between natural obstacles and the human faculties, constitutes the maximum of human advantages. It is neither just nor accurate to suppose, that the best prodigality of Nature is shown in gifts which are palpable to sight. There is a richer and a dearer beauty, perceptible only to the mind, in her very parsimony, for if she sometimes allows to nations a prosperity attained by greater labor, she makes that prosperity more noble and more secure.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### ON SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT.

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#### PART I.

On the Causes which develop and modify Social Improvement.

A PRINCIPAL characteristic by which man is distinguished, is the faculty of growing wiser by experience. Every other race of animals seems destined to remain for ever nearly what it was at its first formation ; while human creatures, instructed and improved by the lessons of their predecessors, bequeath in their turn, to those who follow them, the precious legacy, not only of their wisdom, but of their folly.

From the accumulation of experience, results a condition reserved for them alone ;—social improvement. Though the modes by which this condition has been pursued, and the degrees in which it has been attained are various, yet all may be reduced under two heads, immediately pointed out by nature herself, in the constitution of man. For, as he is composed of physical and moral faculties, and as these are the sources of all knowledge, it must follow that, by the cultivation of either, he may be raised above his original condition ; and assume a higher station than he at first appeared capable of holding.

These two modes of social improvement, though entirely different, have been too commonly comprised in the single name of civilisation ; but things so opposite should not be confounded in one expression. Civilisation, properly so called, is derived from our moral and our intellectual powers ; from whatever binds the race of man together in social intercourse, and gives the greatest efficiency to that compact.

But the progress which our senses enable us to make, belongs to another order of things, and should be differently

designated. For that state of improvement which they can help us to attain, luxury is a more appropriate denomination. It depends upon a sensibility to external impressions, and, though it elevates us above our original condition, it is restricted by the limits of our physical powers, while the boundaries of the other are as expansive as mind itself.

These modifications, then, of social improvement evidently depend upon the circumstances which call into action the moral and the intellectual powers; or else which allow men to indulge in the gratification of their senses, and the indolent pursuit of easy enjoyment. The particulars detailed in the preceding chapters are applicable here; and a general conclusion may be thus summed up. Difficulties natural or fictitious, whether in the early or the advanced periods of society, but which are great enough to awaken the intellectual powers, and sufficiently superable not to depress hope, are the best stimulants to civilisation. The absence of such obstacles, the facilities which allow the mind to take repose, and invite the senses to enjoyment, are the promoters of luxury. And this law is invariable in every state of society, whether deduced from the influence of immediate and individual wants, or from the more comprehensive feelings which operate in the highest state of culture that empires have attained.

The coincidence between the modifications of self-approbation, and the modifications of social improvement, must now be evident to every understanding. The origin and nature of pride are in perfect analogy with civilisation properly so called; while vanity is the parallel of luxury and sensual refinement. As these qualities are more fully explained, the coincidence will become more apparent.

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## PART II.

## On the Development and Progress of the different Modifications of Social Improvement among Nations.

THE physical faculties are the earliest which are developed; and from them we derive the first rudiments of knowledge.

As soon as the ideas received through their medium react upon intellect, the tendency toward physical refinement may yield to a disposition to civilisation. But the earliest impulse cannot be toward this modification of social improvement; particularly in countries where natural circumstances have made enjoyment easy. The first created beings of our race were invited to physical improvement, as well by the common nature of the human constitution, as by the peculiar abundance, fertility and warmth, in which they were placed. The difficulties which they had to encounter easily yielded to their divided skill and efforts; and everything courted their senses, while nothing stimulated their reflection. As long as they remained in this situation, they could not owe much of their improvement to their moral powers.

Had mankind been differently situated; had the earliest elements of society been established under more rigorous circumstances, the progress of mind would have been different; but it may be questioned whether it would have been so rapid. The task of thought might have been too overwhelming, had it been crudely and abruptly imposed upon creatures who had no precedents to prove its advantages; and early improvement was more likely to ensue from the allurements of the senses. Strange, then, as it may appear, to say, that the interests of civilisation were better promoted by circumstances in which everything seemed to conduce to luxury, it is probable that, at the expiration of a certain period, the human species had attained a better lot than it would have done if, in the outset of its career, it had encountered greater difficulties.

But as generations began to spread beyond the regions of paradise, new situations created new wants: new wants

became the stimulants to faculties which had hitherto lain dormant; and social improvement was diversified by the development of all the powers which have been gradually discovered in human nature. The capability of finding moral resources suited to every situation, has fitted man to dwell in every region, and made the whole globe his habitable patrimony.

The natural circumstances of Asia did not exact very large contributions from the understanding, but gave ample opportunities for sensual gratification. Although the pompous relics of her magnificence are testimonies of the improvement of society, yet they are still greater proofs that too much was sacrificed to show; and that the strength and industry of the many were compelled to contribute too largely to the luxuries of the few. If, indeed, the comforts of the poor had accompanied the enjoyments of the rich, Asiatic improvement would have had a greater resemblance to civilisation: but their clothing bore no analogy to the Tyrian purple; their habitations were in no proportion with the pomp and splendour of Babylon, Palmyra and Persepolis; and all things evinced that the progress of those countries was less moral than physical.

As the overflowing of the Nile inspired the Egyptians with more pride than had been felt in Asia, so did it give them the conviction that difficulties were often more superable by moral than by physical force. Still, however, in their social improvement, there was too much magnificence and ostentation; too little mind and heart. Many monuments, indeed, remain of considerable proficiency in some sciences and arts. But that proficiency was partial; it was excited by the wants of a peculiar situation, and, though superior to all that had preceded it, it was deficient in many things which alone merit the name of civilisation in its truest sense.

The course of social improvement, like that of mankind, was along the eastern borders of the Mediterranean; but until it had reached the northern shores it was much more luxurious than civilised; and sensual gratifications were preferred to intellectual advancement. Even the Phœ-



nicians, to whom the world is indebted for many valuable discoveries, were more addicted to the industry of luxury than of civilisation; but, being intermediate agents between many nations, they collected wisdom from all. Some of the arts, however, which contribute the most to embellish society; and to minister to its comforts, were unknown to them. Something more cogent than a mere position of which men may take advantage if they please, but of which they are not absolutely compelled to profit, is required to urge them to turn it to its best account; so much more powerful is necessity than opportunity.

A remarkable phenomenon in the history of mankind is the change which social improvement underwent, as soon as it reached the northern shores of that sea which first beheld a tendency to civilisation stretch along its coasts. It became a new endowment; it introduced a different order of things, and modelled anew the principles of moral and political association.

It was in Greece that mankind began to run this new career; a career which had a much greater affinity to true civilisation than any condition of society that could have been previously conceived. It would be unjust to say that Asia, though luxurious, was not civilised; but the characteristics of civilisation in that continent were so weak as to give but little tincture to the general mind. In Greece the best mode of social progress became predominant, and may be traced in every province of thought, as sensuality gave place to intellect, and men found that the powers and faculties of each might be useful to the whole community.

In Asia men had not been drawn together by any strong motives of interest or necessity; nor had they learned to perceive any great advantage in union. But in Europe social union was induced by the feeling that they might be useful to each other; and that common efforts directed to a common end were the best method of alleviating the difficulties in which all participated. Now the great characteristic of civilisation as opposed to luxury is combination; the conviction that more may be obtained by unity of design, than by the divided wills of multitudes, however numerous.

Combination, indeed, is the intellectual feature which distinguishes man from all other animals ; for, though the beasts of the field herd together, their union is gregarious, and their condition remains unimproved. But man in his worst state is assisted by man ; and his best lot is attained only when he combines with his fellow citizens, to prefer the welfare and advantage of the many, to the pleasures and enjoyments of the few.

The difficulties which the Greeks had to overcome sufficiently taught this lesson ; and turned their social career into the path of true civilisation. It was thus that they became the parents of European advancement ; and that the legacies which they have bequeathed remain at this day among its richest treasures.

The Romans were still more civilised than the Greeks. The situation of the latter was sooner made easy ; but the former were compelled to more reflection, to a profounder appreciation of what was useful, and to a more provident attention to practical than to speculative advantages. They had not time to indulge in the pleasures of intellect, or to revel in the voluptuousness of thought. But they were the greatest proficient in the arts which unite, into one system, all the elements of society, and all the powers of man. These were made indispensable to them by the position which they had assumed in Italy ; and it was not until the world was in her power, that Rome underwent the fatal change from civilisation to luxury, which terminated in her ruin. Even to those who fear to decide which of the two nations was superior in social progress, the species of improvement attained by each must appear different. In Greece it had a strong tincture of luxury, even when most intellectual ; in Rome it was more rational. Notwithstanding the number of eminent Athenians, the collective wisdom of the Romans was greater. The diffusion and equality of intellectual progress raised the mass of the population to a more exalted station ; and, though the eye might meet with fewer and less perfect monuments of Roman than of Grecian art ; though the memory of fewer poets and philosophers may have escaped the ravages of time, yet the mind of

the Capitol will inspire more useful recollections than the splendor of the Parthenon, as the relic of a purer civilisation.

But the civilisation of Rome could no more be lasting than her pride ; for both depended upon difficulties which were of her own creating, and not inherent in nature. They decayed as her power was confirmed ; and, in her prosperity, she became the most luxurious, as she once had been the most civilised of cities.

The northern nations of Europe were barbarians when the Romans first became acquainted with them ; and had made little progress in either species of social improvement. In that which they had accomplished, however, a much smaller proportion of luxury was to be found, than among the Asiatics, or even among the Greeks ; and the early Germans were more behind the Persians of the same age, in sensuality than in thought. When the Italians appeared among them, they were strangers to the customs of the South ; and though, for the most part warlike and intrepid, the military discipline and tactics of their invaders astonished and overawed them ; and military discipline and tactics are the civilisation of warfare. They could not, however, fail to imbibe some portion of improvement ; but as it came enforced by the sword, they submitted to it as to a law of the victorious. The species of improvement, too, which the Romans could then offer to them, was not that toward which they were impelled by natural circumstances.

In this conjuncture hordes of barbarians, to whom every improvement except rude and savage aggregation was unknown, issued from the still more northern fabrics of human generations ; and spread themselves over the south as far as plunder attracted them, and overpowering numbers helped them to extend their arms. Against such hordes, the small addition which the Roman conquerors had made to European improvement could not avail ; and the little civilisation which the middle regions had attained was annihilated. To this state of things succeeded a period of darkness, during which all social progress was depressed throughout Europe. The sovereigns of those times were, indeed, sur-

rounded by savage pomp and power, the fruits of ignorance and barbarity ; but subjects knew not what the social compact meant ; and learning was held detrimental, while military prowess alone obtained respect.

It is ever to be regretted that the changeful scene of devastation occurred in the quarter of the globe where intellect had shone in its greatest glory. Yet it is fortunate that the immutability of Asia had preserved some traces of former progress, which in later times it restored again to Europe, and which must be considered among the elements of her present civilisation.

Returning improvement appeared, as the first had done, in the South ; but now it flowed in two different channels. To the Eastern peninsula it was restored, almost immediately, by the original teachers of Italy, the Greeks. In the western, the Spaniards received it from the Arabians, who, indeed, were disciples of the Grecian school ; but who had disfigured the doctrines of their masters with many extravagant fancies. The former modification was more congenial with European minds ; the latter was strongly tinctured with orientalism. But, in modern, as in ancient times, social progress commenced in the regions where climate gave men more physical mobility ; and it was matured where the necessity of labour taught them to reflect.

If any country in Europe can be said to have escaped the effects which the fall of the Western empire had brought upon this continent, and thus to form the link between the ancient and the modern period, it is the republic of Venice, a state founded by the few who, escaping from the troubles of the continent, settled in the unmolested islands of the Adriatic. There the social system revived, in a wiser form than any which was contemporary ; commerce, the offspring of necessity aided by maritime opportunity, flourished at an early period ; and political wisdom was familiar before the great majority of European states began to learn it. A little to the south of this republic, improvement of another species made equal progress ; and Etruria became a second time the cradle of the arts, which thence diffused themselves to less hospitable regions. To the south of Florence, again,

another city arose, long the spiritual metropolis of the Christian world; and the kingdom of the Church succeeded to the empire of the Cæsars. From Rome the doctrines of our Saviour were propagated through Europe, and in many parts of Africa and Asia; by Rome the European community of states was governed, as by its spiritual chief. In policy, in letters, in religion, in all that forms the social union, Italy was again the instructor of the North. But when the second lesson was given, the time had become propitious. The precepts and examples of the more improved people were not, as formerly, thrown away upon men unprepared to receive them. They were appreciated and preserved; and every nation adopted as much of them as was in conformity with its wants and disposition.

The only part of modern Italy, however, which had been tutored by necessity, was Venice. Etruria, though ravaged like the rest of the peninsula, retained her natural advantages, as did Rome. But the maritime republic began her greatness in poverty and in difficulties. She soon found that she could exist but by prudence, and she was taught to be wise. She became proud also, while her neighbours continued to be vain; and the arts which she cultivated were more nearly allied to true civilisation, than the sculpture, painting, and literature of the Tuscans; or the supremacy of the Popes.

The improvement of the Western peninsula was hastened on by the presence of the Moors, who introduced many splendid arts and manufactures, together with some literature and science; though they neglected to cultivate true wisdom, and to develop the reasoning powers. All that the invaders could communicate they had learned from Arabia, a country ill qualified to be the instructress of the North. The real advantage which Europeans derived from her was, that her example turned their untutored attention toward the acquisition of knowledge, and gave them a taste for study and improvement. But the situation of the Spaniards was not favorable to intellectual progress. The presence of conquerors allows no time for the expansion of the understanding, no barter of ideas producing general concert.

The repressed vanity of Spain was, indeed, converted into pride, but her intellect was not improved. Pride is a moral, civilisation is a mental quality; and, although both pride and civilisation generally proceed upon the same principles, circumstances may occur which depress the one while they elevate the other. During various foreign occupations, the Spaniards acquired more virtues than knowledge. They became magnanimous, rather than wise; brave and generous, more than civilised; and they cultivated qualities which laid the foundation of one of the grandest of European characters in individual action, in individual devotedness, but which is not as efficient in national combination as in personal impulse.

There was a time when the nations now the most improved of Europe, the Britons, French, and Germans, were among the most ignorant. Of these three, the French are they whose social improvement partakes the most of luxury. The pursuits of this people have always been directed to the pleasures and enjoyments of life, more than to its solid comforts. They pay more attention to the relations of individual intercourse, than to the combination of the social system; and their understandings, though abundantly quick and sensitive, are deficient in the large and comprehensive views which accompany civilisation. At the same time, however, that the general tendency of France is more toward luxury than that of any European nation, she has mingled with her physical refinements a greater share of intellectual improvement than they have done. Among luxurious nations she is the most civilised.

In the same manner, among civilised nations, England is the most luxurious. Her native resources, indeed, would not entitle her to indulge in sensuality. But the efforts which her natural poverty compels her to make, aided by her maritime opportunities, bring her home the best productions of the world; and superfluous magnificence is essential to her interests. Her luxury, too, wears a character of reflection, a mental more than a material type. It is dependent upon wider relations than personal voluptuousness, and participates even in the solidity of her intellectual progress.

But, if such is the luxury of England, how much more mental is her civilisation ! Without this, indeed, her prosperity could not exist. Civilisation has been forced upon her by natural difficulties, while the prize held up to her as the recompense of surmounting them, has excited her exertions. It is by making it the basis of her social system, that her greatness has grown and is maintained. Of all the nations which have existed, that which has attained the highest degree of civilisation, as of pride, is England.

The Germans are less luxurious than the French, and less civilised than the English. They do not possess the natural advantages of the former, or the same opportunities for exertion as the latter. But even supposing the stimulants to reflection to be greater in Germany than in England, still the space in which it can be exercised is more circumscribed. Bounded on all sides by an inland frontier, the communications of the former are limited to her immediate vicinity ; while the latter, standing in a more permeable medium for thought and civilisation, has learned the wisdom of the remotest climates. The difficulties of distant adventure have left the former country ignorant of the advantages of concert, and the national genius has not shown itself powerful in proportion to the profoundness of individual conceptions. It would be sufficient to mention a few of the things which the Germans have imparted to mankind, to prove that, though her civilisation is less indebted to them than to Britain, they have contributed more to the best progress of the species, than the luxury and politeness of the French.

The regions of true civilisation seem to terminate, in Europe, with the North of Germany, and the British Islands. The countries nearer the pole are beset with too many difficulties to obtain its best forms ; and, even if they could, they are too small, divided as they are, to have much influence upon the social state of Europe. Denmark is composed of too many minute parts, separated from each other by the sea, to form a compact mass. The position of Sweden is more advantageous, though more northern ; and the wisdom of that country is greater. The last European



nation which has emerged from barbarism is the most northern; and the circumstances which have attended its social improvement make it, in some points, an anomaly among empires. It owes a great portion of its progress to the efforts of its monarchs, not to any movement of its own; and many circumstances have occurred, in opposition to its natural situation, to impel it toward physical refinement and luxury, rather than toward civilisation proper.

Of the sovereigns who the most contributed to raise the Russian empire from its former darkness and debility, neither John Basilowitch nor Peter the Great can be compared with their contemporary monarchs in knowledge. One of the first measures of the former was to collect strangers, capable of teaching his subjects the arts and manufactures of which they had never heard; that is to say, who might create in them factitious wants, which were suggested by no physical or intellectual progress. Posterior to the revolution of England, Peter travelled over Europe, and studied whatever he thought would be beneficial to his empire. But the habitual tyranny of those rude monarchs was unfavourable to civilisation; and the example of Asia, the unpolished luxury which they admired among the Tartars, were still more detrimental. The czars wanted instruments of conquest, rather than enlightened subjects; and Russia had only to employ her physical strength to become powerful.

This premature improvement has divided the nation into two parts; one of which, without passing through the previous steps which give vigour to the mind, has been rapidly advancing to that state of society which history has often shown to be the forerunner of national decline, while the other has never broken the miserable bonds of early servitude, which make it a property of its superiors. A northern nation, buried during one half of the year in frosts, yet neglecting to provide for the distresses of the poor; obliged to struggle against all the acrimony of nature, yet converting its peasantry into implements of ostentation; oppressing, not solacing, debasing, not improving them; unable to secure immediate necessities, yet providing pleasures for a



distant day ; imitating, near the pole, the habits of the tropics ; introducing into Europe the political systems of Asia ; luxurious in poverty, and vain amid physical difficulties ; could be produced but by one of the most remarkable irregularities which men have hitherto committed in the system of social improvement.

Civilisation, properly so called, seems to be the offspring of Europe only. In Asia and Africa it certainly was not indigenous. America, when discovered, was more luxurious than civilised ; and even the northern provinces, when first known to the British, had made more progress in physical than in mental improvement. These, however, were the districts of the new world in which civilisation might have grown the most easily. But it was not spontaneous there ; and it seems to have waited either for a positive example, or for a more powerful stimulus than any which existed, before the presence of European nations had modified the minds of the primitive inhabitants.

A circumstance which never happened before, and which never can occur again upon so large a scale, is, that, in the very infancy of society, the individuals who composed it were endowed with the most mature understandings. Since the independence of the United States, the North Americans have principally followed the path which had been traced out by their British forefathers ; and they were induced to continue in it because they had many difficulties to oppose. But those difficulties, as in Ancient Greece, bespoke abundance more than poverty ; and promised such easy fertility and greatness, that it may be questioned, notwithstanding the remembrance of past examples, whether civilisation or luxury will finally predominate. But this much may safely be conjectured,—should the social improvement of the United States terminate in luxury, their luxury, like their vanity, will be much more European than Asiatic.

With a very few exceptions, then, and none which may not be easily explained, civilisation seems hitherto to have kept pace with pride, and luxury with vanity ; and everything indicates that their connexion will be eternal. It

depends upon natural circumstances ; and never can be broken, unless the order of nature be subverted.

The preceding facts suggest that true civilisation is a mode of progress which could not have been attained without some previous quickening of the physical powers ; though social progress might afterwards be easily converted into its best mode, wherever it was favoured by circumstances.

The generations which came from Asia to Greece, were the best qualified for preparing the transition ; for they possessed a strong and lively sensibility to external impressions, a quick perception of pleasure and of pain. Of sensual enjoyments their new situation nearly deprived them ; but their faculties, instead of falling into supineness, were turned aside from disappointed luxury to attainable civilisation. No sooner, indeed, was the best mode of social improvement matured, than it became capable of being imparted ; and regions in which no real traces of it could be found before received it. Thus it was that the Spaniards and the Portuguese communicated much of their civilisation to Mexico, Peru, Chili, the Brazils ; and the children of the Anglo-Saxons gave still sounder instruction to the more northern provinces. To the lessons of England, even Asia has listened ; and the truths of British philosophy are beginning to be heard amid the errors of the ancient Benares. The lot of Europe has been to harbour social improvement in its imperfect state ; to ripen it into a better condition ; to impart it to the rising West ; to return it to the stationary East ; to be the inventress and the diffuser of moral culture ; to bind the senses to the mind, and duly to balance the faculties of the species.

For these reasons, the nations in which social improvement made its first progress, are not at this day the foremost in the career. Asia, once the instructress of Europe ; Asia, which saw the human race begin, and perish, and begin again, and all its generations dispersed over the globe ; which beheld the first formation of society ; where mighty empires rose and fell, before the petty states of Greece could be formed,—is now as little civilised as in the

time of the Assyrians. Europe, which counted no great associations of highly cultivated men until near three thousand years after the creation ; in which but a portion so small as not to be reckoned in the immensity of its present population, was really civilised ; which emerged from its second period of darkness only five hundred years ago, has made such progress that, if it be compared with all that Asia has gained since the flood, it would lead to the conclusion that no lapse of years could raise the old world to the state which this continent has attained. The people which, in the first improvement, led the way to every brilliant conception, and, in the second, prepared its regeneration, are now no more the superiors of mankind. Greece long since has given up the pursuit of intellectual honors. Italy has ceased to be the teacher of nations. Spain, far poorer now in intellect than her former treasures promised, is surpassed by her pupils. France, even so late as Francis I., was held by the Italians to be in a state of barbarism. Yet social combination has long been more extensive there than in Italy ; and men have earlier learned this fundamental precept of civilisation, ‘ *Vis unita fortior.*’ England again, though not so early versed in the minor concerns which render social intercourse easy, has long been superior to the South in true civilisation. To the north of these limits, the law of national character is modified by difficulties, some of which no labour can remove. The progress of America, though so long doomed to linger without moral culture, has been still more rapid than that of Europe. It is true, that country was not condemned to the delay of combining the elements of civilisation, and of slowly carrying them to maturity. Thus universally, whatever progress is made by the senses is almost instantaneous, but it is soon arrested ; while the advances of mind, more slow in the beginning, proceed with accelerated rapidity.

The tenacity with which civilisation adheres to Europe, has shown itself at two very distant eras ; but the circumstances which attended its development at each epocha were different, and all were favourable to its present mode of existence. In the first place, the civilised nations of the

early period had everything to invent. They had no records nor examples to help them; while those of the latter were assisted by all the documents which had escaped destruction. Ancient civilisation was not mature enough to resist the assaults made against it; neither had the diffusion of light been sufficiently clear or general to leave very bright impressions. The mind, stunned by the outrages which it had suffered, remained in a state of torpor, until the demands of men issuing again from darkness, called for a regeneration. Then it was that their children, setting out anew in quest of attainable civilisation, began their second venture from a more advanced station than that from which their ancestors had started; and have constantly employed their ingenuity in providing the means of security and progress.

Secondly; civilisation was conferred upon the North by a nation of the South, who had learned it from oriental examples and traditions: and it was too much tinged with luxury to suit the wants of men who were forced to labour for existence. It is true that modern civilisation came also from the same source; but not until many centuries of association had enabled men in every climate to discover the means of improving their condition. Thus, the analogy between accident and nature was preserved; while, at the former period, inexperience had been the cause of many contradictions.

Thirdly; modern civilisation was more spontaneous, more gradual, and, to a greater extent, the result of necessity. That which the Romans would have introduced was inculcated by arms; the very worst means were taken to mature the understanding. By arms, too, it was destined to fall; and it quickly yielded to returning barbarism enforced by conquest. It is true that, long before the invasion of Italy, intellect had partaken in the general decay of Roman greatness, and would have continued to do so, had neither Goths nor Huns appeared. The loss of the Alexandrian Library had a similar influence in hastening on its decline. Civilisation is not so attached to written records as to perish when they are destroyed; and if human reason had been

ripe enough, its total downfall could not have been effected by the loss of resources which were of its own creation. Were all the libraries of modern times (certainly a more precious deposit than that which Omar burned) to perish by one stroke, the shock would not now so completely overthrow the human understanding, that social improvement could not outlive their loss. The long eclipse of light which followed the destruction of the Western empire, and, by many ages of darkness, has marked an awful separation between ancient and modern history, must be accounted for on more stable and general principles than the accidents of fortune.

Fourthly; many of the nations which, in former times, were instrumental in hastening on the destruction of civilisation, are now interested in its preservation, and would be the foremost in its defence. Civilisation acts upon nations as upon individuals; it unites them into communities for the general good. The empires of Europe, though often at variance among themselves for their private interests, have more than once been joined in a common cause against barbarians. The descendants of the northern Scythians now man the bulwarks erected against Sarmatian incursions. The children of the Huns, established on another frontier, have often seen their country the theatre of war and carnage, carried thither, by long and circuitous marches, from the borders of the Caspian sea, and the mountains of Turcomania. Civilisation is now too general, and luxury too intellectual, not to create a universal interest in support of the present condition of society.

Fifthly; not only the number of civilised nations is greater than it was formerly, but the number of persons who, in each nation, partake of the benefits of social improvement is more considerable. Many are the modern institutions unknown to the ancients, by which they are protected, and raised above the condition which they held in the old republics; and, from one end of Europe to the other, so much oppression could not be found as prevailed in Italy even before the first Punic war. The people, then, of every state have an interest in promoting social improvement,

which they could not feel before, and they who once might have been indifferent to it, are now among its warmest defenders.

Sixthly : The nature of modern improvement is superior to all that antiquity can boast of. The time which has elapsed, and during which so much has been added, is alone sufficient to constitute this superiority. It is a property of civilisation to strengthen itself by every new acquisition ; and the inventions and discoveries with which such diversified necessities have enriched the present condition of Europe, are as anchors cast out in the great current of time, to stem the fury of all future ebbs.

And, lastly : Christianity is the summary of all civilisation. It contains every argument which could be urged in its support, and every precept which explains its nature. Former systems of religion were in conformity with luxury ; but this alone seems to have been conceived for the regions of civilisation. It has flourished in Europe, while it has decayed in Asia ; and the most civilised nations are the most purely Christian. As long as Christianity prevails, the overthrow of civilisation is impossible.

The social improvement of modern Europe, then, seems to contain within itself the elements of its own preservation and increase. This is evident even from the rapid view just taken of the subject. But it will be still further proved by a minute examination of civilisation in all its details ; in religion, morality, government, literature, industry, the arts, the sciences, the state of social intercourse ; for of these it is entirely compounded ; and its influence upon human concerns, as opposed to luxury, will be better appreciated.

## PART III.

On the Reaction of the different Modifications of Social Improvement upon the Characters of Nations.

**HOWEVER** indisputable the superiority of pride may be over vanity, the advantages of civilisation compared with luxury are still more certain. It is, indeed, sufficient to know that the former proceeds from the understanding, the latter from the senses, to leave no doubt upon the subject.

One of the earliest and most important effects of the best modification of social improvement is, to teach men the benefits of union and compact, and to make them feel that, wherever there is understanding, its power is increased by unity of intention, much more than by numbers. This conviction knits together the divided force of individuals, and binds them in the common interests of society. The view which it takes of human concerns is the most enlarged and benevolent. But the senses do not conduce to union, because their pleasures are not increased by participation. Luxury leaves each man to work out, as he may, his own solitary enjoyments, without regard to the community, and confines his gratifications to the narrow feelings of selfishness and sensuality.

The only advantage which can fairly be attributed to luxury is, that it has been the first state of improvement which a large portion of mankind had attained; and that its progress is rapid enough to abridge the time of sufferance and probation, which would otherwise be necessary. But this advantage is more than overbalanced by the narrow reach which is allotted to it. The early Asiatics might, indeed, have disputed this point, but modern Europeans would not hesitate to give the preference to civilisation.

History abounds in proofs that, notwithstanding the evil which some morose philosophers have laid to the charge of civilisation, almost all the good which nations have possessed may be attributed to this modification of social progress;

and nearly all the evil to luxury. It is to luxury that Asia owes her long stagnation in intellectual inferiority; a melancholy compensation for the earlier advances which she once made. It is by luxury also that Africa has been held in sad subjection to the rest of mankind; and that all traces of mental cultivation have been constantly rendered weaker in warm and fertile countries, than in those where labour is necessary. The superiority of the Egyptians over many of their predecessors was entirely owing to the introduction of greater civilisation than former nations possessed; and the Greeks rose superior to the Egyptians by the assistance of intellect. Even Arabia derived advantages from being compelled to thought, more than other parts of Asia; and much of its literature and science resulted from its natural circumstances, which gave that varied peninsula an impulse toward mental exertion, and mingled a larger portion of civilisation with its luxury, than fell to the lot of its neighbours.

The only disadvantage which can be laid to the account of civilisation, its tardy commencement, was long severely felt in Europe, and delayed the progress of social improvement there near thirty centuries. This continent, indeed, never could prosper by luxury, unless introduced by an excess of civilisation, and of wealth, arising from well directed industry. But, as soon as civilisation began to appear there, it rapidly increased; and, by its assistance, the first nations of this continent that subsided into a settled order of society far excelled their predecessors. It was because the civilisation of Rome was more solid than that of Greece, that, in the great concerns of the social system, she was so much superior. It was by the corruption of civilisation, and the ascendancy of luxury, that the fall of Greece was caused; and that the armies which had triumphed under the banners of intellect, were defeated when summoned away from their pleasures. It was because the influence of Lycurgus over the small republic of his birth, and his eminent wisdom, had banished from it all the means of sensuality, that the power of Sparta, her domestic tranquillity, her good order and virtues, lasted from the time of



her lawgiver till the Achæan league ; that, during five hundred years, she was paramount in Greece by her abstinence, her valour, and her fortitude ; and maintained her liberty with fewer internal commotions than the Athenians employed to become enthralled. It was in the age of Solon,—or of wisdom,—that Athens laid the foundation of her future greatness ; in the age of Miltiades, Themistocles, Aristides,—or of glory—that she reaped its fruits ; in the age of Pericles,—or of luxury—that her moral decline began ; in the age of Philip,—or of corruption—that her fall was completed. It was by civilisation that Rome subdued the world ; by luxury that she lost it. Her great men, Numa, Cincinnatus, the Fabii, Regulus, belonged to the season of civilisation ; Cato, Brutus, Cassius, Vespasian, Titus, to the recollection of it. Her heroes, Cæsar, Pompey, Antony, Augustus, were born in an era which often is intermediate between civilisation and luxury, the era of licentious glory. Her emperors, Caligula, Nero, Domitian, Caracalla, Heliogabulus, were its sad effects ; and at every epocha, the minds and the morals of the Roman people were in conformity with the men whose influence in the state predominated, and with the sway which they wielded.

The later nations of Europe show, even more strikingly than the ancients, that civilisation is the source of all lasting greatness. The luxury of the modern Greeks, which nothing but the annihilation of natural advantages can eradicate, has kept them enervate ever since the day when they refused to listen to the admonitions of Demosthenes ; and has warred against them more successfully than Philip, Mummius or Mahomet. The luxury of Italy has depressed her, during many vicissitudes of fortune, from the time of Sylla to the days of Pope Pius VIII. ; and even her spiritual despotism, which has so much retarded the progress of the world, results from a vice in the mode of social improvement established there. The Spaniards were indebted for much of that great character which, amid the absence of proportionate intellect, astonishes Europe, to the impossibility of indulging in sensuality, amid the necessity of military exertion. France owes the greatest part of her misfortunes

and reverses,—a full counterbalance to her natural advantages,—to her being the most luxurious of civilised nations. From a larger proportion of civilisation than of luxury, Germany derives many of the advantages which she enjoys, and which she has shared with the rest of mankind. To civilisation England is entirely indebted for the superiority which has enabled her to execute more than any nation, with a like extent of territory, ever before attempted. To it also the north of Europe, with a single exception, owes many of the moral blessings it enjoys. By it, and by the absence of luxury, Sweden long was happy. By following the example of rude Tartaric luxury, Russia has been diverted from the path which nature intended her to follow; and, if she would recover her lost time, she must begin by a return to that mighty teacher. Poland, more fertile, more luxurious than any of the nations which surrounded her, was more inconsiderate, more rash, and more prematurely unfortunate. Even America, during the short period of her social improvement, confirms the doctrine that nations owe all the advantages of their progress to civilisation, and all the disadvantages to luxury. The northern provinces were the first which became strong enough to be independent, and wise and good enough to be free. The southern and more fertile districts are far behind them in wisdom, virtue, liberty and happiness, because they are deficient in civilisation. A due attention to the future progress of this vast continent, will, if this theory be true, corroborate the opinion, that the advantages of civilisation are unbounded.

A proper distinction between civilisation and luxury is all that is necessary to refute the doctrines, which maintain that man is happier and better in the savage, than in the improved state; doctrines which indeed cannot be admitted with any modification whatever. Even luxury makes him better than he was; and though it may not correct all the vices, or give him all the virtues of which he is capable, still it softens and refines his nature, and spreads embellishments over all his being. It makes a lovely statue of the block, gives grace to the limbs and polish to the surface; and,

though a soul may still be wanting, there is yet much to admire in so wonderful an image of life.

The soul can be bestowed by civilisation only. Civilisation is feeling, understanding, virtue. It is all that the heart and the mind can give to the union of men in society, and the summary of all that is good in social improvement, religious and political, moral and intellectual. It is one of the most legitimate sources of pride which men can have ; for it is the best condition which they can achieve, and the work of their most valuable faculties.

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## CHAPTER V.

## ON RELIGION.

## PART I.

On the Causes which develop and modify Religion among Nations.

THE feeling of veneration, the tendency to acknowledge a supernatural cause of all things, are innate in the heart of man. Religion is an instinctive sentiment; and they who have asserted that there are nations in whom no traces of it are to be found, must have been led into error by ignorance of their customs, manners or language. In some men indeed the instinct may be stronger, but in no region of the earth can it be totally deficient.

This feeling cannot but be strongly excited in the breast of any person who opens his eyes upon the wonders of creation; and his heart must be filled with awe and with a mingled sentiment of fear and respect. But when he perceives the harmony of all things, and learns that he is superior to every living creature, the lord of earth, the inheritor of a better world, his gratitude must be even greater than his awe; and his hopes must prevail over his apprehensions. Every sentiment must be directed to the author of good; and from the union of all must arise the religious feeling which distinguishes the rational from the brute creation.

But awe and gratitude, like every human sentiment, are susceptible of many modifications. When we walk on even ground we do not feel the want of a conductor as we do when we tread the brink of a precipice; and our gratitude to the person who offers unnecessary aid is not so lively as to the man whose assistance has been effective. Thus are our religious feelings modified by hope or fear; and, as we

live in security or apprehension, different modes of expressing those feelings are forced upon us.

Some might imagine, that the greater the benefits which we receive from Omnipotence, the greater should be our gratitude. But, in well-ordered gratitude, there is something more than a mere feeling of the heart ; for it never is so solid and so impressive as when regulated by reason.

Difficulties then, sufficiently great to awaken our best exertions, and sufficiently superable not to damp our ardor, maintain in us the worthiest notions of the Divinity. By making us reflect upon the bounty of Providence, they inspire a better sense of the debt of gratitude we owe. They strengthen our affections, no less than our understandings ; and the character which they give to religion is piety.

But where men can live in ease and thoughtlessness, their religious feeling is less strong. Far from being founded upon the reflection and meditation, which result from the necessity of labour, it is a creature of the brain, which instead of warming the heart merely plays round the head. The character which too much security against natural wants impresses upon religion is imagination.

In a general view, all the religions yet known among men may be comprised under two heads : the pious and the imaginative. The former originates in the same natural circumstances which give rise to pride, and favour the progress of true civilisation. The latter springs from the same sources as vanity and luxury ; and is their constant companion.

The characteristics of pious religion are a deep and constant sentiment of obligation and duty ; an uninterrupted feeling of thankfulness to the Creator ; a desire to stand in his presence unostentatiously, and to praise him in silence and in secrecy. The greatest benefit which men derive from being placed in natural difficulties is, that their religious feelings are strengthened by it. Were we always to steer before a propitious breeze, we should forget to call upon the God of storms ; but, when we escape from the tempest, we hang our votive tablet where we can, and the universe becomes our temple.

The characteristics of imaginative religion are a wilder enthusiasm, and more pompous ceremonies, shows and pageantry; more fanaticism, less reason; an extravagant longing after far-fetched rites; neglect of evident duties for useless trials and abnegations, and intolerance of every other belief. In these it is easy to recognise the characteristics of vanity and luxury; while pious religion is accompanied by all the dignity of pride—with the expanded mind, the ardent, yet rational affections of civilisation.

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## PART II.

On the Development and Progress of the different Modifications of Religion  
among Nations.

THE progress of religion in the world most amply proves that imaginative creeds have always belonged to the empires in which vanity and luxury have predominated; and that devout religion is the constant attendant upon civilisation and pride.

Mr. Hume, whose writings on the subject of religion contain so much that is reprehensible, has asserted that polytheism was the primary religion of man; and that his opinion is confirmed by every record of antiquity. In this assertion, however, it appears that the remotest antiquity here, as in many other cases, has been substituted for the original state of man; and the limits of what we know have been assumed as the limits of what is.

The consequence which must naturally be drawn from beholding the world is that all results from one great cause. The feelings which this conviction must inspire would be too energetic not to be concentrated upon a single object; and the being to whom man, in his first emotion, would ascribe omnipotence, would be one. The grandeur and magnificence of monotheism suit the early state better than a host of inferior agents, who, by dividing wonder and gratitude, would diminish their intensity. When indeed a complication of effects is perceived, the

to make a god of everything, supposing that whatever is inexplicable, is best honored by being converted into an object of worship. It is thus that polytheism may arise. But this is not the first state of man ; nor are such religious sentiments the nearest to his instinct.

The opinion of Mr. Hume is further contradicted by a great part of history, in the first ages of the world ; and, though it is true that eighteen-hundred years ago men were generally polytheists, it does not appear that this was the primary religion of mankind.

In the first place the worship of one only God was the universal practice of the primitive ages, as long as they remained uncorrupted ; and it continued nearly undisturbed during more than seventeen-hundred years. All men were then of this creed ; and in sacred history, none but monotheism was established during that period.

Among the nations which formed themselves round the valley of Shinar, after the dispersion of mankind, monotheism was the prevailing opinion ; neither was it till some centuries after the flood that the worship of many divinities became general. Although the Chaldeans and the Assyrians were among the first great nations that admitted idolatry, they originally knew but one God. The early Persians too were monotheists ; and the Egyptians, who, at a later period, did so much to make religion contemptible, were in the beginning the worshippers of one only Deity. The Chinese, whose houses are now filled with images, were once of the same belief ; and the early Brachmans of India were monotheists. Thus this sacrilegious and degrading position of Mr. Hume, which he put forth only in support of his infidel doctrines, is contradicted, not only by the philosophy of the heart, but by the history of man.

The solemnity, the truth of monotheism belong to piety ; and it is in religion only that a deviation from pride can be observed among early men. But religion is beyond the reach of common rules ; and such an exception, instead of weakening the theory of pride, only confirms the interference of supernatural aid, in a concern in which, more than in any other, it was necessary.

But the first assistance being given, religion submitted to the general rule; and polytheism began to gain ground. It may be traced from the astrology of the Chaldeans, through many nations of antiquity, who admitted more than one God in form or substance. The greatest of visible objects, those which appear worthy of the most divine honors, are the heavens with their globes of eternal fire; and these were soon adored by the vain nations that dwelt about the Euphrates and the Nile; in every region where the firmament is particularly resplendent. In the foremost place of honor stood the planets which appear to us the largest and the brightest of the stars; and whose influence was supposed to be the greatest. But, as they presented a variety of astronomical phenomena, not yet explained, and were subject to changes which astonished those who knew not the causes, many conclusions were imposed upon the vulgar as infallible predictions; and the most disgusting idolatry was gradually substituted in the room of true piety. Men did not long remain content with objects so remote; they created tangible representations to supply the place of absent deities. Thus arose the worship of images, the belief in talismans, and all the creeds which suppose a communication of supernatural virtues and qualities to inanimate things. By degrees moral sentiments, passions, became deified by fancy; and essences, clothed in form and matter, were adored.

The deification of remarkable men was a natural consequence of polytheism; and it is to be found not only in the fabulous and heroic ages, but even among such Christian sects as admit of an intermediate order of beings. Formerly, indeed, acts of valor led to the Pantheon; while modern canonisation is conferred only upon piety. The principle is the same, but the practice differs with the mind of the age. So general, indeed, is the feeling which prompts men to confer something like divine honors upon departed mortals, that there are few among us who do not feel gratified at the thought, that the spirit of a respected friend still takes a part in our concerns.

The instructor of the Jews was God himself, and the purest religion was known and practised by them.



simplicity of the patriarchs was favorable to it; and it was promoted by the pastoral lives which the children of Israel at first led. Their contempt for the arts, sciences, and still more for wealth and honors, preserved them from idolatry. At length, however, their piety diminished. In the wilderness they murmured against God, whose miraculous bounty only fed their vanity. There they demanded of Aaron, the brother and the partner of the man whose divine mission they had but just acknowledged, to make them other Gods; and while Moses was receiving instruction for their welfare, they were instituting festivals in honor of the golden calf. When they had overrun the land of Canaan, they grew still more vain and luxurious; for it was most fertile—and their conquest of it had not been laborious enough to inspire them with pride, or to teach them reflection. No sooner therefore was the leader under whom they had passed the Jordan, and taken the city of Jericho, no more, than they sunk into idolatry, from which, and from the evils that ensued, they were delivered by Othniel. But they did not long remain faithful; and, in half a century, they were led astray by the Moabite women. From this enthrallment Ehud set them free; but at his death they were again perverted. Another half century later, they became once more the dupes of women; and the Midianites seduced them, as the Moabites had already done. The mystic period of fifty years, which it seemed almost impossible for them to pass without the crime of irreligion, saw them again perverted; and another half century produced another relapse. After this, came on the brilliant era of the Jewish monarchy under David and Solomon; when luxury was extreme, and when the Jewish worship received all the splendor which the most imaginative religion could desire. In his latter days the wise and powerful builder of the temple sunk into corruption and effeminacy; and, among the vices which followed in their train, was idolatry. To gratify his seven hundred wives, and his three hundred concubines, he ordered temples to be erected to their false divinities in his holy city; and the mount of Olives was polluted by altars to Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and to Moloch the bloody

deity of the Ammonites. After the division of the kingdom under the kings of Judah and of Israel, Jeroboam, to prevent his subjects from going from Jerusalem,—which they were bound to do three times every year—set up two golden calves at the extremities of his kingdom. Some attempts were made by the succeeding monarchs to preserve the true religion, but in vain; for the examples of Ahab, Jezabel, and Athaliah were more powerful than those of Asa, Jehoshaphat, or the prophet Elijah. Impiety prevailed almost without interruption, as well in Judah as in Israel. The gods of every country were admitted into their temples, as long as the Jews continued to have a national existence. From the death of our Saviour, until the last burning of the temple under Vespasian, their apostacy was frequent, and was always accompanied by circumstances of treachery and cruelty, unknown to proud, civilised and pious nations. Nowhere was the tendency to imaginative religion so strong as in this perverse people; though it was constantly opposed by the admonition of God himself.

The Jews might be held as forming an exception to the common destiny of nations, being under the immediate guidance of the Almighty. Yet the conformity of all their concerns with the laws which act upon the characters of other nations is a very strong testimony that those laws are general and peremptory.

Although the nations of Asia and Africa were originally monotheists, yet the simplicity of this doctrine yielded to more imaginative belief, as soon as their early religious impressions had given way to the sentiments which arose out of their favorable situation. The Chaldeans further mingled polytheism with two arts, which essentially belong to imagination, not to reason. From them, astrology and magic were propagated among the surrounding people; and, whether taught by the learned of this sect, or by a native impulse, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians had their Sabiism; and their religious character was in complete opposition to piety.

Among the most rational mythologies of the early East, was that of the Persians. The worship of one God had

been taught to them by Elam, the son of Seth; and, though they became corrupted by the general diffusion of Sabiism over the East, they retained a stronger sense of the unity of Almighty power, and a more adequate notion of the divinity, than the neighbouring nations. They rejected images, and could not tolerate that the spirit or the form of Omnipotence should be confined in tempests. It cannot be denied, however, that they were imbued with many practices which could not be admitted in pious religions; and, in the decline of the empire, the adoration of Venus was allowed by this amorous people, though condemned by the Magi. The reformation accomplished by Zoroaster, though it introduced Genii presiding over the details of human life, and established new ceremonies in the worship of fire, taught the exclusive adoration of one only Supreme Being. Even the religion of Mahomet, the most ferocious and warlike of the East, has been a little softened in Persia. Thus the descendants of the men who, being beaten the same day by sea and land, at Mycale and Platea, burned and demolished all the statues, and altars, and temples of the Grecian divinities in Asia Minor, as emblems of idolatry and superstition, have also rejected some of the most imaginative doctrines of the Mahometan impostor.

The Persians are a vain people, like all the inhabitants of Asia; still, however, they must not be placed in the same degree as many other nations of that continent. Persia lies in the regions of great warmth and fertility; but is so intersected with mountains, that the climate and productions are a little different from what its latitude promises. The heat in certain provinces is sometimes so excessive, that the natives abandon their habitations to retire into the mountains, while another portion of the country is buried in frosts. Both theory and history declare that the inhabitants of southern mountains, and of northern plains, even should the temperature be the same, do not receive similar impressions of mind. The sky, the productions, the scenery, the sensations, all are different; and even should perpetual snows cover the mountains of Louristan, or of Bukharia, or uninterrupted verdure bloom in the Steppes

of Issim or of Baraba, the native of the former would be recognised to belong to Southern Persia, as easily as the inhabitants of the latter would be known to appertain to the confines of Siberia ; and to the vast northern declivity which slopes down from the high table land of Tartary, and from Mongolia, to the icy ocean.

The religion of India has existed, as it now stands, from the earliest ages. The Grecian army commanded by Alexander found all the rites and superstitions, which astonish modern Europeans, established there ; the division into casts ; Fakyr, some living in forests and devouring the roots of the earth—others selling amulets, taming serpents, and telling fortunes ; some stretched upon the ground, exposed to the torrents of rain—others braving the stings of insects, and the heat of the sun, upon stones almost burning with its vertical rays ; Bayaderes prostituting themselves to the public in the temples ; widows burning themselves, as now, to the sound of martial music, and with their most precious jewels, on the funeral pile of their husbands. The permanency of all these customs shows the settled tendency of the vain inhabitants of fertile and genial Hindostan to the religion of imagination more than of piety.

Even in a colder climate than this, to the north of the Himalaya mountains, another imaginative religion prevails ; and the Dalai-Lama, the eternal vicar of God, who never dies, but assumes different human forms to the eyes of men, reigns over the whole centre of Asia, and the heights in which the Indus, the Ganges, the Burrampooter, and the Irrawaddy take their source. The conquest of China by the Tartars has introduced the worship of this extraordinary divinity into the country of Confucius and Fo, who had established rites and doctrines little less extravagant and imaginative, accompanied by superstitions, and ceremonies, and festivals, which denote anything but true devotion and piety.

But the region of the East, in which the progress of religion affords the most instruction, is Arabia. The inhabitants of this country were, like all their neighbours, Sabians. After being for a considerable period the

shippers of one God, they at length adored the planets, in honor of whom they had seven celebrated temples; and, in or about the Caaba of Mecca, there were appropriate idols for every day in the year. Their religious rites and tenets were in every point of view imaginative; and the most complete idolatry prevailed.

But idolatry is not the only characteristic of imaginative religion; and polytheism may be reformed, yet the creed itself remains as remote as ever from piety. Thus, in the religion of the Arabians, the impostures of Mahomet were as irrational as all that had been taught by the Chaldeans; and though its fundamental creed acknowledged but one God, its characteristics were luxury, imagination, and sensuality.

Mahomet was, perhaps, the most dexterous, as well as the most enthusiastic impostor whom the world has beheld. Born with all the passions which degrade the most profligate of men, and with all the energy which raises the most elevated above their species; uniting the most contradictory qualities; ardent and impetuous, yet cunning and dissembling; eager for enjoyment, yet capable of the longest privations; openly reviling those who published forgeries in the name of God, yet pretending that he had habitual conferences with the Almighty, he directed all his powers to the gratification of an ambition which was at once warlike, political, and religious; and claimed a higher prize than temporal power, by uniting with it the empire of the soul. A circumstance which proves the talents of this man is that, although he professed himself to be a divine legislator, he never pretended to reform his nation or his disciples. He turned to account their existing qualities; and summing up, in one comprehensive view, their average disposition, he composed an average religion suitable to all; and thus united the natives of the diversified peninsula, at once, round his standards and his altars. Lycurgus, indeed, might change the character or reform the morality of thirty thousand Spartans. But Mahomet could do no more than float with the current of mind, already set in motion by preceding circumstances; and, while he felt within himself

the power to raise a tempest which would shake the roots of the old regions of the world, he knew that every blast which did not second, must oppose his efforts.

Arabia eminently possesses the oriental characteristics, physical and moral. Two large portions of it are nearly barren, interspersed only with a few fertile oases, which furnish food to wandering hordes. Amid the rapid succession of momentary occupiers, just notions of property cannot have any influence; but force or cunning must prevail, together with the independence which always exists where possession is not ratified by law. Another portion of it is exuberantly fertile, interspersed with the most delicious vallies, producing exquisite fruits, and encouraging sensuality. Between its two capitals, Mecca and Medina, passes the tropic of Cancer. To suit the various characters which belong to Arabia Felix, to Arabia Petrea, and to Arabia Deserta, religion must be as diversified as those districts. It must be ferocious for the one, and sensual for the other; vain, luxurious, enthusiastic, wild for all. To the robber it must inculcate the plunder of unbelievers; to the warrior it must preach conquest and extermination; to the slothful it must allow the pleasures of the senses; to all its votaries it must promise an eternity of voluptuous beatitude, provided they fall in defence of the prophet. The dexterous chief granted his followers full indulgence in their favourite pursuits of rapine and women, in this world; and promised that, in the next, the faithful should rest peaceably in the seventh heaven, near to the throne of God, and be refreshed with the air of paradise; that they should eat the most delicious fruits, drink wine, milk and honey; wear the most sumptuous garments; hear the most delightful music, and be attended by black-eyed, undecaying Houris. He told his people militant that none of them could be injured but by a previous decree of providence, which they would in vain attempt to shun; that they who bled for the faith should have entire forgiveness of their sins; that at the day of judgment, they should rise again with their wounds as beautiful as vermilion, as odoriferous as musk; and that their lost limbs should be supplied by the wings of cherubims

and angels. These are the principles which guided the great impostor, and one sixth of the present world is Mahometan.

But, it may be said, the religions of Europe, at a similar period, were equally imaginative; and the mythology of the Greeks, the sacrifices of the Druids, the gods of the Scandinavians were as remote from piety as any creed of Asia. These however bore the characteristics of other regions, even while they retained a common feature of ignorance; the two last belonging entirely to the North, while the former, imported from a southern climate, assumed a new aspect when adopted by Greece.

Although the early creeds of Europe and of Asia resembled each other, in admitting the fictions of imagination in the room of piety, yet a difference at length began to show itself; and Europe, disclaiming the flight of fancy in religion, retired within the severer limits of true devotion.

One of the earliest systems established there, the Greek and Roman mythology, was imported principally from Egypt; but it soon became modified by the natural circumstances of the regions into which it travelled.

The Egyptians were beset with so many petty terrors, that little room was left for any grand conceptions of religion. Surrounded by natural phenomena for which they could not assign the causes, their forms of worship were so replete with pusillanimity, that they adored the reptiles upon whose heads they should have trodden. Almost everything that crawled upon the earth was esteemed a divinity; and their choice was directed by the most childish apprehensions. Thus the sheep, the ox and the dog were worshipped as benign and useful; the ibis and falcon as destroying venomous reptiles; the crocodile because it defended the country from Arabian robbers; the ichneumon because it prevented the too abundant multiplication of the crocodile; the cat because it destroyed the asp, and the asp because it never grew old. But the different cities did not agree in the respect due to these divinities; for the inhabitants of Heracleopolis worshipped the ichneumon, those of Arsinoe the crocodile; at Oxyrynchus dogs were eaten; at Cynopolis they were deified.



When this mythology was transported into Greece, it was stripped of some of the doctrines which owed their birth to local circumstances, while it was loaded with others analogous to its new situation. The principal Egyptian divinities, and some of inferior order, were admitted into the Greek Pantheon; but the worship of plants and animals was exploded. Religion thus became more rational; yet the objects of worship were still clothed with more than human frailties. Their new hosts, fearing neither Arabian robbers, nor crocodiles, nor ichneumons, conceived their deities to be unjust, rapacious spoliators, as they themselves had been in the beginning. But, as they advanced in social progress, they added the more refined vices of sensuality and polished immorality, exemplified in the amorous intrigues of the court of Olympus. A great part of the scandalous history of the heathen gods, as well as the sensual propensities attributed to them, originated in Greece. The Egyptians were too much engrossed by the fear of disgusting insects, to allow such indulgences to their divinities. But when the Pantheon was transplanted beyond the torrid marshes of the Nile, its votaries filled it with the sensual and luxurious pursuits in which they themselves delighted.

Upon the whole, the religion of the Greeks, though more rational than that of the Egyptians, was not perhaps more pious. Although the former did not worship cats, and dogs, and leeks, and onions, they had not a greater respect for Olympian Jove, than the latter had for Osiris. They were a more poetical people; and substituted more amusing tales in the room of disgusting follies. Their imagination was guided by better taste, and their religious system was more refined.

From Greece the heathen divinities travelled into Italy, where they were received with a degree of veneration to which they had not hitherto been accustomed. The religious feeling in the former nation was a creature of the fancy; while, in the other, it became a sentiment of the heart; and the Romans paid their false divinities a veneration and devotion which would have done honor to a **h**  
In every page of their history may be fo



obedience and resignation, rarely surpassed even in the countries where Christianity has taken the firmest root.

The religious statesman of this people was Numa ; but not even he could have produced an effect equal to that which the influence of natural circumstances would have brought about, had they been allowed to act without the interference of another cause. In vain would this wise legislator have erected temples and drawn the citizens in crowds to places of public worship ; in vain would he have instituted the Julian and the Fecial priests, and the Vestal virgins ; in vain would he have invoked the authority of the nymph Egeria, if something more powerful than she was had not previously awakened a spirit of piety, for which the Romans were no less distinguished than for their pride.

The profound sense which these men had contracted of religious duties, had the same origin as most of their virtues. The garden of Europe, of which their arms by degrees obtained possession, might have prompted them to pay but empty thanks to their beneficent deities, had not the struggle of subduing it given them other sentiments ; and the alternations of exertion and success prevented them from falling into religious apathy. Piety continued as long as necessity weighed upon them ; but it subsided when their political situation had ceased to make them apprehensive. Still however the pride of Rome, with many of her virtues, had perished long before her respect for the gods was extinct ; for Marius, Sylla, Cæsar, who trampled upon her human institutions, yet left her temples inviolate, and dared not to trifle with the sanctity of her divinities. At length however this last of the great qualities, which had raised her above the nations of the earth, declined ; and she finally sunk into irreligion and impiety.

The religion of the Druids was not less imaginative than that of the Greeks and Romans ; and Scandinavian mythology largely partook of the same qualities. Such is the natural consequence of the precedence which imagination takes of reason in the progress of mind. But the religious fancies of the north, though full as ignorant as those of the south, are of another complexion.

It is a weakness of the human constitution that man is incapable of abstracting the grandest conceptions from the frailties of his own nature. This effort of mind no development of reason can accomplish ; and all our wisdom does but cheat us into a better opinion of our own acquirements. The word infinity may not be comprehended by the savage of America ; but the thing is equally inscrutable to the most learned European.

Bound down then as men are to the grossness and materiality of their natures, it is not surprising, that in every country, they have created divinities after their own likeness ; that they have given them their own imperfections, armed them with their own passions, and overwhelmed them with their own weaknesses. Religious imagination, or as it is usually called superstition, may be reduced to the mere embodying in supernatural forms, all the frailties which the conferrer of divine honour feels himself ; and all the power from which he has anything to hope or to fear.

For this reason, although the gods of Asia and of Europe had some qualities in common, they had many which were unlike. Voluptuousness is the characteristic of southern mythologies ; severity, a sternness amounting to ferocity, are the attributes of the gods of the north. While the Greeks allotted to departed mortals a continuance of the enjoyments which they possessed in Asia-Minor or in Greece, the Scythians supposed them to be carousing in the great hall of Odin, drinking fermented liquors, so necessary in colder climates, out of the skulls of their enemies, and revelling in immortal drunkenness. In Arabia, sprites, charms, amulets had their place, and composed a host more amusing than awful. In Scandinavia the people revered the spirits of the winds and of the waves, the tempests that howl among the mountains, the clouds that make even day portentous. The superstitions of Ossian would appear as preposterous in the province of Yemen, as a belief in the influence of the stars and planets, in regions where the constellation of Orion never is seen but through mists.

The difference in the religious tendencies of Europe, and the rest of the world, began to show itself essentially

the best period of social improvement arrived, and when civilisation, slowly but spontaneously springing up after long periods of barbarism, enabled this continent to leave far behind it the regions which were earlier happy. It eagerly received the truth and piety which had been offered equally to Asia and to Africa; and which, while they insensibly decayed there, gradually became the standard doctrines and the practice of the prouder nations of Europe.

Our Saviour came into the world when this continent was hardly in a condition to profit by his word. His apostles preached, not only to the surrounding countries and cities of Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, but to the whole earth. Damascus, Phenicia, the greatest part of Syria, were converted, as were the provinces of Asia Minor, and, indeed, all the tract of ground lying between the Euphrates and the Egean Sea, together with the important islands of Cyprus and Crete. Africa also received the faith; Ethiopia, under its queen Candace, Egypt, Carthage, Cyrenaica, the whole coast as far as the Pillars of Hercules, embraced the Christian doctrines. In Greece the new religion was taught with success; and the three most celebrated cities contained between the Egean and the Ionian Seas, Athens, Sparta, and Corinth, adopted it. The capital of the empire, the chief of more provinces than are here enumerated, became filled with the new believers. To the north of the Alps the progress was slower, but the regions nearest to Rome were the earliest converted. From these the light of Christianity proceeded northward; and its diffusion was in constant proportion to that of every other branch of civilisation. But extensive tracts both of Asia and Africa had earlier and greater advantages than the generality of this continent, because they had longer been engaged in the career of social improvement, and because they were nearer to the centre from which the new light emanated.

The first checks which Christianity received in Europe, whether from the adherents of Paganism or from the faults of those who professed it, were in the regions where it first triumphed. It was in the East that sects arose, whose

discussion upon subjects as unimportant as they are unintelligible brought it into disrepute, and ultimately prepared its easy subversion before the arms of the Arabian conqueror. Persecutions, which, to her eternal shame, the capital of the world allowed to be ten times renewed, commenced against the religion of which she afterwards became the metropolis. At Antioch disputes began concerning the modes of interpreting the word of God; and were continued at Rome even before the Apostles had ceased to preach. Heresies were promulgated, and sects arose, most prejudicial to the unity of belief; for every nation of the Gentiles engrafted the truths of the new doctrines upon its former superstitions. The votaries of Christ, instead of endeavouring, by the helps of wisdom and knowledge, to raise themselves to the same intellectual level as the pagan philosophers, whose opinions had been matured by all the aids of human ingenuity, contended that their church should repose upon its own ostensible merits, and that erudition could only injure it. While Christianity was increasing in the Roman territory, and its adherents were multiplying in every order of society; while the Goths were becoming less ferocious by listening to the Gospel; while, in Gaul, the churches of Paris, Tours, and Arles, and in Germany, those of Cologne, Treves, and Mentz, were prospering, and even Scotland, as some assert, was converted, the empire instituted no less than five persecutions. Even philosophy attempted to undermine the true religion, studying to combine its doctrines with paganism. The disciples of Origen, seduced by the Platonic philosophy, still more than their great master, gave rise to the two systems of theology, the scholastic and the mystic, which, recommending silence and solitude, drove men into caverns and deserts, and founded the monastic establishments, which have never ceased to abound in the countries of indolence and fanaticism. In Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, sects as numerous as they were absurd, arose, and helped on the downfall of Christianity in the East.

Better days began under the miraculous cross of Constantine. It was in Britain that this first Christian emperor,

he who, in A.D. 331, ordered all the heathen temples to be destroyed, was proclaimed. This prosperity was interrupted by Julian; but it began again under his successors, particularly Theodosius. The pagan philosophers, however, continued their insidious attacks, and not quite in vain. Christianity, nevertheless, spread in the East, in Armenia, in Georgia, in Abyssinia, in Dacia, Mœsia, and Thrace; among the Goths, and among the Gauls. But, in Persia, it was persecuted at three different periods, by Sapor II. It should be remarked that the ferocious and barbarous Goths less frequently devoted their Christian subjects to persecution, than did the Eastern nations, sunk into luxury; because Christianity, though not fully understood by their wisdom, was at least in harmony with their simplicity, and was not opposed by any luxurious tendency, as in Persia.

At length the new religionists began to feel that erudition was necessary to enable them to cope with their learned and subtle opponents, and schools were established. But the superior clergy continued to monopolize power. The presbyters and the people lost their privileges, and the Bishop of Rome became the monarch of the church. A formidable rival, however, sprung up in the new capital of the empire, and the Bishop of Constantinople was, without the consent of the Western prelate, declared next to him in rank and dignity, to the detriment of Alexandria and Antioch.

Christianity was attacked in the East by every thing that could injure it; as if to demonstrate that its doctrines were less suited to those luxurious nations, than to the vainest countries in which true civilisation was indigenous. So reprehensible was the conduct of its votaries there, that the very name of Christian was held in detestation; and hatred towards them went on increasing at least during two centuries. The disciples of the church of peace, and not Mahomet, prepared those regions for any creed which could collect their wandering imaginations, and fix their vague enthusiasm. Islamism was offered to their voluptuous and predatory inclinations; union instead of contention; con-

quest in the place of subjection ; dominion for slavery ; luxury for privation. The contrast was too seducing, and the first realms of Christianity relapsed into the disorders of superstition. Thus it was that, although ignorance and barbarity had given some assimilating characteristics to Asia and Europe in early times, yet the accumulated action of original causes produced at length the differences which may be considered as the completion of their influences in religion.

Since the introduction of Mahometanism the Christian religion may be said to have been entirely subverted in all the countries to the east and to the south of Europe ; for though, by the zeal of the Nestorians, it gleamed during a time beyond Mount Imaus, it soon sunk ; neither have all the efforts of later missionaries been able to re-establish it. It is now confined to a very small number of native votaries, although the communication between these parts of the world and the sources of Christianity have considerably multiplied.

The progress of the Christian religion in the south and in the north of this enlightened continent was almost as dissimilar as it had been in Asia and in Europe. It was with the greatest difficulty, and after many centuries, that it pervaded the western provinces of France, Poland, Russia, Norway, many parts of Germany, and even Hungary ; and still more slowly did it reach the countries of the Danes, the Finlanders, and the Slavonians. No less than five crusades, in which the wisest nations of Europe participated, had taken place against the infidels of Palestine, before the Prussians were entirely converted. Louis IX. of France, whose pious quixotism has placed him in the calendar of saints, had expired before Tunis, one hundred and sixteen years before Jagallon Duke of Lithuania had embraced the Christian faith. While the southern Europeans were endeavouring to rescue the temple and the sepulchre of Christ from the pollution of Mussulmen, the Christians of the north were frequently compelled, by still greater barbarians than themselves, to abjure their creed, to demolish their churches, and to massacre their priests.

The adoration of images accords with imagination, more

than with reason ; and the splendor with which they may be adorned, and which they bestow upon places of public worship, is in harmony with vanity. It has therefore been more or less adopted by southern nations. The frequent displeasure of the divinity opposed this propensity in the Jews ; and the Arabians were so prone to it, that Mahomet could remove it only by giving scope to their sensuality. But the real cause of the disunion of the church in the south was ambition. Rome claimed precedence as the capital of an old and powerful state ; Constantinople enjoyed the actual presence of the emperors, and availed herself of their authority to wrest from the Pope many provinces which had, till then, acknowledged his jurisdiction. In the ninth century the schism broke out, which, till this hour, has kept the two churches separate, to the scandal and prejudice of the Christian interests, with no benefit to the theory or practice of religion or of morality, and without reforming any abuses or diminishing any vices.

The two chiefs of these religious factions were equally ambitious ; but the destinies of Rome, for the second time, prevailed ; and she became the arbitress of every spiritual concern. The prelate of Constantinople, though upheld in his foreign and religious pretensions by the emperors, was yet repressed by them, as soon as he interfered in political concerns.

But the Bishop of Rome was not sufficiently near to any of them to awaken their jealousy, yet not too remote to authorise their indifference. The sanctity of his office gave him all the weight which opinion can procure ; and kings and emperors appealed to his decision. In Italy his power was the most fully acknowledged. In Spain it was allowed under certain restrictions. In Gaul it was opposed whenever it interfered with the national church. The Britons, a prouder people, and farther removed from his influence, entirely denied it. Spiritual authority never is so firm as when supported by temporal power ; but this the church had not yet acquired.

The desire which the popes always cherished of delivering Italy from the yoke of the emperors and of the Lombards,



and the ambition of Pepin, who aspired at usurping the throne of his master Childeric, gave room for mutual obligations between the two sovereigns, both without territory. The former gave his holy unction to the usurpation of Pepin. Pepin delivered Pope Stephen from his enemies, and founded the patrimony of St. Peter; who never had possessed any upon earth. The spiritual Prince became temporal; and thus began the abuses and corruptions which, issuing from the south where they have not yet been corrected, spread finally over the north, where, exciting the disgust which they deserved in proud and enlightened minds, they were at length opposed and extirpated.

It was in the south of France that the encroachments of the popes, the vices of the clergy, the corruption of religion began to awaken indignation. Struck with the difference which existed between the original precepts of the church and its practice, the Waldenses proposed the reformation of abuses about the middle of the twelfth century; and found adherents in Lombardy, in Bohemia, in England, and in other countries. At this period the social improvement of France bore a higher proportion to that of other European nations than it since has done; and the French were placed so near the centre of those corruptions, that they were more affected by them than remote nations. Reformation generally is proposed by the nearest witness to abuses, in maintaining which he has no interest. But the French, the Lombards, the Bohemians were too imaginative to complete a system of rational reform; neither was the age in a condition to second them. The consequences of the Waldensic heresy, as it was called, were endless and infinite persecutions; the establishment of the Inquisition in Gallia Narbonensis; the extirpation of the sect; and the perseverance of the triumphant clergy in every vice. Such must always be the end of every reformation, undertaken by men whose dispositions are more in harmony with the disease than with the remedy.

A more successful attempt was made in England, about two centuries after the commencement of the Albigenses. Still the British nation was not sufficiently enlightened to



adopt the opinions of Wickliffe; and some further progress was necessary before the people at large could feel the practical absurdities of the church of Rome. Between the periods of Waldus and Wickliffe, the influence of natural circumstances had been operating in England and France, to the advantage of the former; and though, in 1150, the difficulty of its situation may not have been sufficiently overcome, to raise it in all points to the level of its rival, yet, such was the increase of intellectual capacity excited in the interval, that, in the year 1385, Britain stood the most advanced in sound civilisation, and was more capable of profiting by the lessons of religious reformation. Religion was among the very few points of true civilisation, in which France had the start of England. In political wisdom, Britain may date an uninterrupted superiority from Alfred at least. Political wisdom grows, like most human concerns, out of the nature of human things. But religious wisdom proceeds more slowly, until aided by revelation.

Wickliffe was the most enlightened reformer who preceded the time when religious reformation was practically possible in Europe; and the British nation, in his days, was the most capable of understanding his doctrines. No such religious war ensued there as in France; no such indiscriminate massacres as those of Beziers, Carcassonne, and Marmande, were there perpetrated. In England not quite thirty Wickliffites perished at the stake, and a few were condemned to lighter punishments. In France, three hundred times that number were massacred; and of these, seven thousand perished in a church,—a sanctuary which the fury of fanaticism should have respected.

From England the doctrines of Wickliffe were carried into that part of Germany which, from its natural fertility and its warmth, is the most addicted to vanity. Bohemia, protected on all sides by mountains, and enjoying a productive soil, was instructed to oppose the Romish church by Jean de Huss, who had learned in England the opinions of Wickliffe. But the Bohemians, unprepared to receive them, embraced them not out of reflection or conviction, but out of levity and inconstancy. The consequence was

not the calm adoption of principles, or the dignified sufferings of martyrdom, but a militant host, whom persecution forced to victory. Intestine quarrels divided them, and they were annihilated, after committing cruelties as atrocious, though not so numerous or so perfidious, as the French. One chieftain, indeed, did honor to the cause of Huss, for he had few equals in ancient or in modern history. Had Ziska acted upon a larger theatre, his name would be like those of Hannibal and of Cæsar. His failure, and the failure of the Hussites, show the danger which attends the premature introduction of any principles, however good and wise, into a nation unprepared to receive, and incapable of appreciating them; neither can the knowledge, the liberality, and the efforts of a few supply the deficiency. The misfortune of Ziska was, that he too far outstripped the genius of his age; while Hannibal and Cæsar only obeyed the temper of their respective times. The greatest man must surpass his contemporaries but by a little, and the boldest truths must be proportioned to the comprehensions of those to whom they are addressed. If they are not so, they are of no more advantage to the world than a beacon raised above the clouds.

The fall of the Hussites was the end of everything like religious reformation in Bohemia. When other parts of Germany became ripe for it, the season of that fertile kingdom was gone by. Its inhabitants, the vainest of the Germans, have all the qualities which accompany that disposition, quickness, versatility, and levity. They are fond of show and splendor, and the pageantry of Catholicism particularly delights them. They are not so enlightened as many of their neighbours, nor so capable of perfecting any of the great works of reason.

The religious revolution which has been crowned with the greatest success in Europe, began in a poorer country than Bohemia—in Saxony, where thought is more indispensable, and where greater industry is necessary to promote individual comfort and general prosperity. The progress of the Saxons in social improvement was tardy; and, though their conversion was earlier than that of the

Bohemians, it was accomplished, not by reason, but by force. The difficulty with which they were compelled, by Charlemagne, to embrace Christianity, after a struggle of thirty-three years, and their frequent relapses into idolatry during that period, are the characteristics of a northern nation, that had not leisure to make much progress in civilisation. But their adoption of the principles of Luther, eight centuries later, showed that, when the first difficulties were subdued, and intellect was ripened, it could rise superior to its former rivals. The religious revolution was complete there, as soon as it became allied with reason; but, in Bohemia, it declined as soon as it assumed a rational form.

The vices and abuses which awakened the zeal of Luther, had been greater before his time, than they were when he began to oppose them; but Europe had beheld them without a hope of correction. The scandalous scenes which usually attended the election of the sovereign pontiffs; the subserviency of the Vicegerents of Christ to the more powerful princes; their tyranny over the weak; their vices, among which assassinations, poisonings, incest, were most common; their avarice and injustice; their disregard of religion, were the causes that justly wrung from their jurisdiction many empires which might not have been revolted at moderate abuse of power. Bad as were the indulgences of Leo X. against which Luther raised his powerful voice, yet all the actions of this Pope are light in comparison with the least atrocious deed of Alexander VI. or of Julius II.; men who, at the head of the Christian church, equalled the worst of the heathen Emperors in immorality and impiety. It is always happy for mankind when revolutions, instead of being rashly undertaken to oppose oppressions, or to punish tyranny, are ventured upon in support of principles. The moderation which accompanies them secures their success; and saves them from fatal reactions.

Germany received the sentiments of Luther with admiration, though the agents of the Pope excited strong opposition to them; and finally excommunicated their promulgators. Out of this excommunication arose the reformed creed.

But there were many tenets of the Romish church which he did not attempt to correct. His views seemed principally confined to abolishing the jurisdiction of the Popes and Cardinals, and all monkish orders, and bore but slightly upon religious rites. He denied indeed the doctrine of transubstantiation in its full extent ; yet left such a degree of mysticity in his explanation of it, that some of his own disciples differed from him ; and Zuingli, a native of Zurich, still further simplified his opinion, by stating the eucharist to be merely symbolical. This division of sentiments, however, did not produce so great a division of interests as might have been feared ; and the reformation continued to gain ground. In 1572 it was promulgated by John, elector of Saxony, as the religion of the state. The North was almost unanimous in adopting it ; and the South as firmly rejected it.

The Swedes embraced it, and were encouraged in their generous apostacy by Gustavus Vasa. Christiern II. of Denmark, though as great a wretch as any of those who have disgraced the royal purple, had his subjects instructed in the principles of Luther ; and what his avarice and ambition had begun, was completed by the prudence of his successors.

It cannot indeed be maintained that these northern nations were then in a more advanced state of social improvement, than the South who rejected the reformation ; or that the change had been entirely produced by a superiority of intellect. In every condition above absolute barbarism, pious religion is more consonant to the meditative minds of the North, than imaginative modes of worship ; and the simplicity of the reformed creed naturally suits the habits of men who possess not the means of catholic luxury.

It was in a great measure by the policy of France that the popes had become paramount in Europe. Studiously bent upon excluding the authority of St. Peter from her own territory, she had assisted in extending it through the Christian world. This country however now produced one of its principal antagonists ; whose zeal and talents have created a sect which may well be called the rival of the Saxon church.

Calvin agreed with Luther in many of his opinions, and with Zuingle in many others. But he denied the real presence in the eucharist ; admitting in it only a divine virtue communicated by Christ. His doctrines were less imaginative than those of his predecessors ; and the form of worship which he inculcated was more simple. Calvin too would not admit of bishops, or of any subordinate degrees among the clergy ; but proposed to rule the church by Presbyteries and Synods. Such a system was more likely to be adopted by a proud, than by a vain nation ; and such an ecclesiastical constitution was more suited to a republic than to a monarchy. Though Calvin had once been protected by Margaret Queen of Navarre, sister of Francis I., and listened to even by Francis, he was afterwards compelled to fly to Geneva ; and the vicinity of that city favoured the introduction of his opinions into his own country. There they were received without much examination, without much inquiry, but they did not prevail to any great extent, for neither Lutheranism nor Calvinism was so suitable to the French as the unreformed creed, and religious imagination was more congenial to them, than the profounder feelings of piety.

When the spirit of reformation manifested itself, Calvin had many eminent adherents ; but he had also many eminent opposers. Francis, who at first was in doubt, at last yielded to the remonstrances of the Catholics. He was engaged in politics and favored religious dissensions abroad, while he checked them at home : reproached too by the potentates of Europe as the ally of Sultan Solymán, he would not incur the further risk of being branded as an abettor of heretics. He therefore had recourse to fire and sword, to the stake and to war ; and repressed the growing heresy with all his might. He exercised his power with unexampled severity, for he shed in one night near twenty times as much Protestant blood, taken among a smaller number of reformists, than Mary, the worst Queen of England, did in her entire reign. At his death the number of professing Protestants in his whole kingdom did not surpass one hundred and fifty thousand.

Henry II., like his predecessors, had the Protestants burned under his own eyes; and the most distinguished among them were reserved to make a bonfire at his solemn entrance into his capital. An attempt was made, but in vain, to establish the Inquisition; the Gallican church esteemed itself fully adequate to the repression of heresy. The intrigues and divisions of the court gave the Calvinists an opportunity of extending their communion; and some of the courtiers, as Dandelot and Coligny, espoused their cause, while others, as the Guises, opposed it. But the frequenters of the royal palace soon made religion subservient to their own ends; and it became the object of all the petty manœuvres which their frivolous ambition employed. The kingdom, however, was not the less deluged with blood. An edict in 1559 condemned all Protestants to death; and every person who solicited in their favour was reported a Protestant.

But the true spirit which conducted the interests of the Reformation became still more apparent under Francis II. The courtiers, instead of being solicited by the religionists to defend their cause, appealed to the Calvinists, and urged them to rebellion. It must be allowed that, if recourse to arms ever could be justified by persecution, this was the time. The whole country was covered with death; thousands of the most virtuous subjects were massacred: yet war is not the just appeal for a religion of peace. The blood which is shed on the scaffold or at the stake is the holy offering of pious resignation; but the ensigns of battle are not the badges of patient sufferance. The crusaders flew to combat in the Holy Land, when all Europe was imaginative; the Mahometans enforced their fantastic creed by the sword; the Anabaptists encamped in plains, and stormed cities, where they are now no more heard of; but the first Christians triumphed by their martyrdom, not by their arms. The reformists of England and of Scotland bled, but did not fight.

The succeeding reign in France still further shows how little that nation and the Reformation were suited to each other. The intrigues of the court continued, each party making religion the ostensible motive. But, if the people

had any real attachment to Calvinism, they were deceived by their chiefs, who had no object in view but to gratify their ambition, and to revenge themselves upon those who opposed it. The court of Charles IX., of Catherine de Medicis, of the Guises, was most atrocious; and, though a few men may have favored the Calvinists, the general struggle was not between vice and virtue, but between the various forms and modifications of corruption. The monarch alternately protected either creed. Neither were these murders the only calamity of the reign of Charles. Wars succeeded to massacres, massacres to wars, and the taste for reformation declined.

It was not, however, so exhausted but that, under the next king, a fifth religious war broke out. This war was succeeded by the league, in which religion soon ceased to be the principle of action; and the Catholics took arms against their sovereign, no less Catholic than themselves. This extraordinary confederacy seems to present the most complete anarchy of religious factions, in every respect; but the Guises had attached the fortunes of their house to the success of the Catholics, and thus brought their country and their creed into danger, and their king to death, after being themselves assassinated. The events of the succeeding reign show how far the spirit of rational reformation was obliterated, and deserve attention more than any part of French history.

Among the many candidates for the throne left vacant by the assassination of Henry III., the only Protestant was Henry de Bourbon, king of Navarre; and his faith was the only obstacle to his succession. Until this event, the national will respecting the Reformation might be supposed not to have had any opportunity to manifest itself with freedom; but this was a time when it might have appeared without constraint. No nation indeed ever enjoyed the power of correcting religious abuses more than the French now did, since their monarch had given more unequivocal proofs of his intention than Edward VI. had ever done in England. But the whim of reformation had worn itself away. The followers of the Albigenses, free to speak and to act, were



too few to do either with success. The Calvinists, supported by a Calvinist sovereign, wanted numbers and energy. The nation had returned to its old creed, to its saints and hosts, to confession, to mass, and to images. It was in vain that Henry, having no choice but war or abdication, hoped to bring his people back to the communion which he thought the truest. He was compelled to yield; and before he was crowned, he abjured the religion of his youth, of his belief, and of his heart. All he dared to persevere in was the edict of Nantes, which allowed his former brethren liberty of conscience. The doctrines of the Reformation had made so partial a progress in France, and the bulk of the people had remained so entirely Catholic, that even Henry IV. could not resist the impulse.

The reign of Louis XIII. accomplished the design of Francis I.; and Richelieu, while he supported the reformists in Germany, completely crushed them at home. One of the most politic measures of that admirable minister of despotism was his severity toward the French Calvinists. Three times during this reign armies were sent against the Huguenots; and in 1627, the religious wars which had begun after the massacre of Vassy, in 1562, were terminated by the famous siege of Rochelle. It was most gratuitously then that Louis XIV. revoked the humane edict of the first of the Bourbons; and, by threats and promises, by immunities to converts, and penalties to the refractory, by armies, by dragonades, extirpated the few remaining sectaries of a religion which, long since, had ceased to be alarming to the state. The loss which Francis sustained by emigration alone was immense; and while flattering poets sung that the court of Louis was the asylum of kings, his country ceased to be a place of safety for its natives.

From this time the reformists were little heard of in France. Wars, massacres, emigration, had thinned the scanty ranks of Calvinism; and the few who had conscience, courage, and disinterestedness to persevere, lived rather unknown than tolerated.

The accession of Henry IV. was not the only opportunity which the French have had of substituting a pious in



the place of an imaginative religion. At the end of the last century the national will was most triumphant, and declared itself with the most unequivocal voice that ever issued from a multitude. The government was laid low; the authorities were subverted. Everything was to be new created. The people chose their own ministers, dictated their own measures, and delegated power to their own minions. They might then have chosen their own religion.

When they did so, they immediately fell into the wildest excesses, all of which appertained to imaginative, not to pious creeds. No holy exaltation, no abstract meditation, no ascetic silence possessed them. Atheism became the national religion. With one consent they flung off all belief, and, rushing from the extreme of Christian superstition into utter incredulity, they substituted something which they called reason, in the place of Omnipotence. When this wild and wicked fancy was exhausted, it was succeeded by another; and they conceived they had expiated their impiety when they inscribed upon the walls of their falling temples, that they acknowledged the existence of a Supreme Being, and the immortality of the soul. This, in its turn, was followed by a sect of natural religionists, the friends of a God and of man, the Theophilanthropists. Although the order of government is now apparently restored, and greater approximations have been made to rational freedom than centuries had previously accomplished, religion is not yet secured on any stable basis.

The progress of pious religion in Italy and Spain was, at all times, partial; and, though sufficiently great to alarm the pope, the Reformation could not attain a permanent footing in either country. The Italians, though convinced of the errors of their church, and though sometimes jealous of the ascendancy of its chief, beheld with satisfaction the lost provinces of their ancient empire in subjection to them; and the second triumph of their country was not less flattering than the recollection of the first. The hope of recovering sway by arms was for ever at an end; but the popes had given them a moral ascendancy, to which they could not otherwise pretend. That glory gilded their superstition.

and their chains; and, like all vain nations, they preferred a splendid slavery to truth and freedom with a homelier lot.

It is remarkable that when the kingdom of Naples, then under the dominion of Spain, was infected with heresy, all attempts to introduce the Inquisition were vain, and produced nothing but disturbances and bloodshed. Jealousy of the Spanish people, with whom the proposal originated, seemed to be the motive of this opposition, more than any aversion to the punishment of heretics.

The admission of this tribunal into Spain was much promoted by the evil which the nation had suffered from persons professing a religion different from their own. The example of Moorish unbelief made the Spaniards particularly alive to the inconveniences of two inimical communions in the same country; and unity of belief became their principle. Many individuals acknowledged the errors and abuses which time had profusely scattered through the Christian church; and the very divines who had been sent into Germany to combat the heresies of Luther, returned to their own country more imbued with them than those who had remained at home. They spread the new doctrines as far as was in their power, but the nation was not enlightened enough to espouse them. The Spaniards wanted wisdom, rather than virtue, to become reformists. They did not perceive the tyranny of a tribunal which ransacked private consciences, but which gave them a religious tranquillity almost unknown in Europe; and which, while it persecuted by law, avoided the horrors and the crimes of massacres.

The doctrines of Luther had made some progress in other parts of Europe before they were generally adopted in England. That nation had long been occupied by civil dissensions, from the effects of which it had not yet recovered. The sceptre of the Tudors, in the hands of Henry VII., had been heavy; but still more so in the hands of his son, who, uniting the claims of all the contending parties to the throne, was not kept in apprehension by the fears of a disputed succession. His abilities were almost equal to his vices, and both were great. One of his most marked propensities was toward unquestioned authority on every subject.

He was perpetually changing his opinions, and expected that all who were not his enemies should change as he did. His mind was as tortuous as the writhings of a snake ; and he tolerated none who did not follow in the same track, until, by passing over the ground anew, he had effaced it. In the beginning he opposed the Reformation. But the nation had not forgotten Wickliffe ; and the bias was general in favour of Luther, before the monarch had openly dissented from the pope. Henry indeed was governed by his passions, by his love for Anne Boleyn, and by his ambition, to shake off papal tyranny ; and his appeal to the learned universities of Europe, to obtain the divorce which Clement refused, was an act of open insurrection. But his subjects were influenced by conviction ; and, notwithstanding the varieties of opinion through which he forced them, the national will was strongly in favor of abjuration. For this reason it could not be opposed effectually ; and during the short reign of the amiable Edward, the Protestant religion made great strides. Had it not been for the fatal accession of Mary, indeed, it would have known no retrograde motion ; but her bigotry, her tyranny, and her cruelty, did all they could to arrest the impulse of a people more enlightened than she was. With Elizabeth hope returned—not perhaps quite so keenly as under Edward, yet so powerfully that no subsequent opposition could destroy it. Nay, the exaltation of devotion engendered new sects, that soon outstripped the prudence of reason, and ran into abstractions which it was the interest of the rising creed to oppose.

The British cannot claim the merit of having taken the lead in that reformation which has finally prevailed in Europe ; although it cannot be denied that Wickliffe had prepared the way for Luther ; but they are the people who have made the most extensive application of religious reform, and embodied it the most completely with all their institutions. They have made it a principle in all the interests of the empire ; in the morals of the people ; in the laws, the government, the literature, and in every habit of thought.

They who attribute all the events of history to accidental causes, ascribe the Protestant triumph to the amours of

Henry; but the king was in fact more catholic than his subjects, and retarded the change by his caprices more than he advanced it by his knowledge. Had it not been for his amours, indeed, he might not have been induced to abandon the pope; but the nation would not the less have become protestant. The old religion might have lasted during his reign, and the change might have been brought about under his successor; but no power either of Henry or of Edward, had he been so inclined, could have held it back. Edward gave his whole heart to the change, and advanced hand in hand with his people. Mary opposed their wishes; and, letting loose all the bad passions which fanaticism could suggest, she drowned it for a time in a deluge of blood. But she never could have eradicated it; and, had she reigned as long as her sister, Luther would not have been forgotten. Elizabeth was sincerely attached to the reformed creed; yet the nation was still more protestant than she was; and rather led her to espouse their faith, than waited for assistance from her spontaneous zeal. She admired the pomp of the Romish church, and retained many of its splendid insignia in her private chapel. To these, perhaps, she was the more attached through fear of the Puritans, whose ardor for political liberty did not suit her temper.

The contrast between the reigns of Elizabeth, in England, and of Henry IV., in France, is one of the striking examples of the effects produced by natural circumstances, when a long series of ages has accumulated their influence upon the characters of cultivated empires. As these sovereigns were contemporary, they are proper objects of comparison. Of the two, the French monarch was, perhaps, the most determined reformist. Both had undergone great hardships in the cause, and had narrowly escaped with their lives; but the immediate perils of Henry had been greater. He too had less to apprehend from the tendency of his subjects to political liberty, than she had from the old attachment of the British to freedom. The mind of the Queen was more philosophic, and capable of more general views, than that of the gallant Bourbon; and if she did not incline to liberty, it was not because she did not know its value, but because she w

a sceptre. The French King had no cause to think upon the subject. But a greater difference existed between the two nations than between their sovereigns ; for, while France was relapsing fast into the old religion, and was dragging her ruler, in spite of himself, into the same superstition, Britain was outstripping her sovereign in the road of reform, and proceeding to establish the church as it now stands. In both countries the will of the nation operated more than that of the monarch. In France, it compelled a Protestant King to relapse into error ; in England, it maintained a Queen whose principles were less Protestant than his, in the reformed creed, to which her subjects were irrevocably attached.

The history of the House of Stuart is a demonstration that the public mind, in Great Britain, was entirely Protestant, and that the example of her rulers was of no avail in turning it to error. It may be questioned whether the expulsion of that dynasty would have been effected, had not the religion of the kingdom undergone a previous reform ; and whether such a revolution as that of 1688 would have been possible, with the old creed. Be it that the greatest opponents of political liberty were the most bigoted Catholics, or that Catholicism really is inimical to civil liberty, questions of policy began to involve themselves in the more delicate discussions of faith. Religious sects had their corresponding parties in the state ; Protestants and freemen, Catholics and slaves. At length, the distinction became wholly political ; and the Romish communion was held in detestation, less on account of its own corruptions than as tending to perpetuate abuses in the government. The persecutions which took place during these reigns were not strictly religious ; and neither Protestants nor Catholics suffered merely on account of their faith. When, after the deposition of Charles I., the entire constitution was dissolved, religious sects, which had long been injurious to Protestantism, mingled themselves with the republican faction, which was then triumphant. The excesses committed on this occasion, when the will of the people could avow itself without hope or fear, are particularly characteristic of a nation whose zeal and fervor, when intemperate, are allied with abstract feeling more than with

fantastic forms. The ultra-reformists (for so they may be called) would allow no ministers to teach the Gospel, no ecclesiastical discipline or government ; and all alike expected the immediate infusion of divine grace. But, if ever Atheism was entirely remote from the hearts of the nation, it was during the republican frenzy. The English did not deny their God, or persecute those who believed in his existence. They did indeed err, but it was from a mad desire of reducing religion to a state of simplicity inapplicable to social existence, if not to man himself. Among the multitude of characteristic features which distinguish the revolutions of England and France, the tendency of the former to excess of piety, and of the latter to Atheism, is not the least remarkable.

Since the final expulsion of the Stuarts, the religious progress of England has been to remove still further from imaginative creeds and ceremonies, and to increase abstract devotion, by the multiplication of sects. Though all of these may not be quite so irrational as that which prevailed in the assembly elected and convened by Cromwell, yet many of them far outstrip the salutary tenets of the original Reformation. The peaceful disposition of the Quakers, for instance, would be a worse protector of an empire, than the respect of the ancient Jews for their sabbath. The derelictions of sublunary duties, inculcated by some, wean them from all the affections of this life : the principles of equality, simplicity, and poverty, professed by others, would soon lead the world back to barbarism. Were the duties of religion confined to abstract devotion, the Creator would not have given us any social obligations to fulfil. This life is a life of practice ; and by practice the world was improved.

Within the limits of the British empire, proofs may be found that religion is more pious in the north than in the south, and more imaginative in vain than in proud nations. The doctrines of Luther prevailed in the south of the island ; and episcopacy, though often assailed, has maintained its ground there. The diversities of opinions, the multiplicity of sects which have been crowned with partial success, while they show the versatility of the human mind,

wherever it is free to indulge itself, prove also that the standard sentiments of the nation are in favor of reformation only as long as it is rational. The tenets and the administration of the Anglican Church harmonise with every part of the social contract. Mr. Hume has very properly observed, that ‘ of all the churches which shook off the yoke of papal authority, no one proceeded with so much reason and moderation as the Church of England.’

The principles professed by Wickliffe were not unknown in Scotland; but that country was too poor to make early advances in civilisation. It was from England or France only that she could receive the first impulses of reform; and these foreign states had long divided her into two factions. The partisans of the English were in the Protestant interest, the Catholics belonged to the French. The ascendancy of the latter, who had exercised great cruelties, and threatened more, was finally subdued by the murder of Beatoun, their chief abettor; and the antipathy between the Scots and the English began to subside. The marriage of Mary with the Dauphin of France, her subsequent misconduct, the empire which her intolerant kinsmen, the Guises, had assumed over her, a closer contract and more intimate acquaintance with her allies, only served to awaken the French interest. Everything presaged a change; and a Scotchman, educated at Geneva in the principles of Calvin, was the agent by whom it was accomplished.

The Scottish reformers who had preceded John Knox had imbibed all their knowledge and all their zeal from England; but the return of their countryman brought them new courage and new lights. The ignorance of the Scotch had given peculiar vigour to the corruptions of religion, and their barbarity had increased the vices of the clergy. The indignation of a rigid Calvinist then had ample matter to excite it; and the further the new doctrines were removed from the old, the more they were relished by a people averse to luxury, and whose first great step toward the high intellectual improvement which they have since attained, was made under the influence of disgust at religious abuses.

That the opinions of Calvin and not of Luther prevailed,



is to be attributed to their congeniality with the Scotch character. They were indeed adopted, in spite of every opposition ; and all attempts to eradicate them were productive only of commotions. The forms of worship were reduced to great simplicity, and made as unlike the high mass as they could be. The ecclesiastical government was republican, and deprived even of an aristocracy. Few instances of a revolution carried on with so much coolness and perseverance exist in history ; and the moderation which characterized the proceedings of the reforming party showed that it possessed the virtues which presbyterianism professes. The veil of corruption, flung over them by a vain and vicious ally, was soon rent asunder ; and this unenlightened people quickly became wise, because their instructors were piety and morality. James V. of Scotland declared that ‘ the service of the neighbour Kirk in England is an evil-  
‘ said mass in English ; they want nothing of the mass but  
‘ liftings.’ The aversion of the hardy and simple Scots to luxurious ceremonies was greater than that of the Southern British ; and, when the successors of this monarch attempted to restore them, and to establish an episcopal hierarchy, they were reprobated with virulence and opposed by arms.

Such was not the conduct of the Irish, who, in all the concerns of civilisation, may be considered as the opposite extreme from the Scots ; while the English hold the mean of character between both.

The situation of Ireland is not so favorable to civilisation as that of the other island. The climate, milder than in Scotland, is not so warm as in England ; but the soil is of superior quality. The absolute necessities of life are so easily obtained, that no foresight is awakened among the people ; and idleness is less prejudicial to their existence, than it would be in many countries warmer than their own. Luxuries indeed are quite beyond their expectation ; neither is any labour lost in fruitless attempts to procure them.

The political connexion between Ireland and England could not be attended with such fortunate circumstances, as the union between the two portions of the same island. The Irish people were not in a condition to resist the power



of their invaders, whose superior civilisation they beheld but as a badge of subjection. Every act of kindness, every boon, was suspected; and the uncultivated natives preferred their marshes, their boolics, their mantles, and their glibbes, to all that the English offered them in return for independence. Hostile feelings long continued between the old and the new inhabitants, and prevented both parties from being in a state to appreciate the Reformation. Imaginative religion was their instinct, and confirmed their blind subjection to the successors of St. Peter.

The title assumed by Henry VIII. as supreme head of the church was disputed in Ireland; and, though the parliament acknowledged him as such, little progress was made in converting or convincing the people. During the reign of Edward, the reformed liturgy was introduced, to the great dissatisfaction of the nation, and with a very limited adoption. The reaction commenced by Mary found ready followers, and the relapse was general. When Elizabeth attempted to bring back the Anglican creed, she met with the utmost opposition. The clergy abandoned their cures; the people refused to hear any but the Catholic service; the churches fell to ruin; and it was deemed less heinous to follow no religion, than not to be a papist. Under king James the Catholic pomps were re-established, and the Protestant preachers expelled. During the reign of Charles, superstition was still busy; and, in 1641, forty thousand Protestants were massacred. During the rebellion and the Protectorate of Cromwell, the principles of the Puritans and of other revolutionary sects did not make **as** much progress there as in England; but the power of the Catholics was repressed, while their animosity still subsisted. At the Restoration their hopes revived; but Charles II. did little in their favor, until the close of his reign, when his bigoted brother assumed much influence over him. On the accession of James II., their expectations were unbounded, and they conceived a project of reaction. While this king reigned, he lent them all his countenance; and, when deposed, he received from them all the aid which they could give. When the Prince of Orange ascended the vacant throne,

they were repressed in every point except the free use of their religion. Since that time their conversion has proceeded slowly; and their perseverance in rejecting the Reformation has not diminished.

Now it may be asked, whence arose this difference between the two nations? Surely there was a cause existing before any communication had taken place between them: and can that cause be looked for any where but in the natural circumstances of both countries; in the more productive relation of soil to climate in the one than in the other; in its geographical situation, which removed it farther from the centre of early information, and made its union with its instructors less intimate; in its stronger tendency to remain without employment, than to engage in active business; in its slower progress in the best mode of social improvement—from all of which is derived a stronger attachment to imaginative than to pious religions? Let it be remarked also that the most civilised and pious portion of the island, the north, is by nature the poorest.

In the two countries of Europe from which Nature has exacted the greatest tribute of labour, the Reformation has been most successful. In Holland and in Switzerland the doctrines of Calvin have prevailed, although religious toleration is nowhere more complete. Philip of Burgundy, bishop of Utrecht, was one of the first who held up to public animadversion the corruption of the body to which he belonged. The Reformation spread through his diocese and in the adjacent provinces. Its early progress indeed was disfigured by the follies of the Anabaptists, followed by exemplary punishments and great cruelties, which drew upon the nation the scourge of a tribunal, modelled upon the Spanish Inquisition. Under the government of Granvelle, discontents broke out, and he was compelled to retire from the States General. At length, the excess which the evil had reached led to the remedy; and, from the most dreadful religious persecutions, exercised principally by southern foreigners, arose the liberty, the independence, the prosperity, and the happiness of the Dutch.

No ruler of a nation ever was more capable of giving it an

impulse to good by excess of evil, than the Duke of Alva. Brave, ferocious, calm, he committed in cool blood the atrocities for which other men require the excuse of passion ; and murdered his opponents with as little compunction on the scaffold as in the field. The burning of a besieged town, or of heretics at the stake, had the same charms in his mind ; and, for a single verse of the Scripture uttered in the vulgar tongue, he would have laid waste an empire. Every transgression of his will was a crime, and every crime was capital. Unfortunately for those who then existed, but happily for their posterity, this man was sent to govern Holland. Crowds of the most eminent heads of that small country fell beneath his axe ; and he boasted that, during his viceregency, eighteen thousand heretics had been brought to punishment. But the Prince of Orange escaped ; and the Catholic religion was banished from the altars. The sect which prevailed was the most suitable to the character of a people condemned to struggle, in sleepless vigilance, against a fiercer enemy than an unpropitious soil and climate—the ocean ; and who, more than the founders of Rome, must labour to secure their territory, without a prospect of ever being delivered from anxiety. With no interruption, and little excesses of any kind, the Calvinistic creed has continued to be general in the lands which human industry hourly preserves from being submerged ; while the southern provinces, less affected by such cares, did not shake off the yoke of superstition or of despotism, but have remained in the creed of Austria and France, to whom they have successively belonged.

Switzerland, whose mountainous surface imparts to it much more of the northern character than belongs to its latitude, may, together with Saxony, be considered as a cradle of the Reformation. The first disciples of Zuingli were the nuns of the convent of Fahr, who found his doctrines more intelligible and agreeable than those of the pope ; and who were delighted at being permitted to say their prayers and read the Bible in their mother-tongue. But hardy virtue is more general in the cantons than knowledge ; and some of them adhered to the old creed. The same reli-

gious liberality does not exist there, as in most other countries where the Reformation has been adopted; and much of bigotry yet remains to be eradicated. The Swiss of later times have not fulfilled the expectations raised by Zuingli and Calvin, and by the firm and rational opposition made by their fathers to corrupted doctrines and a vicious clergy.

The laws which regulate religion are still further confirmed by its history in the New World. Previous to the arrival of Europeans, all was purely imaginative in America. The rites and tenets of the Mexicans were wild and cruel, and their superstitions gloomy. Their temples were decorated with representations of the most destructive animals, and their divinities were clothed in terror. Theirs seemed to be a religion of fear, without hope. Their mortifications were rigid, their penances excruciating; they never approached their altars but to sprinkle them with human blood; and not to feast upon a fallen enemy was impiety. Their gods were innumerable, their idolatry complete; and they dishonoured their belief in the immortality of the soul, by granting the same blessing to every animal of creation. Their ceremonies had all the pomp which the state of the arts could furnish; and their priests were treated with a degree of respect greater than belongs to human ministers. The religion of the Peruvians was milder, but not less imaginative. It was more intimately blended with the civil policy of the empire; and the chief of the one was the head of the other. Hence, his authority was irresistible; and the severest punishment was inflicted upon every transgression. Their rites, however, were comparatively humane, and their sacrifices less stained with human blood: but this difference was only in degree; for, if the one offered up human victims to their gods, the others thought it indispensable that his attendants should follow their sovereign to the other world. The former slew 12,210 men and women, at the consecration of two temples; the latter, at the death of Huana Capac, murdered more than a thousand of his friends, relations or servants, and buried them round his tomb, that they might be ready to appear with him when he should return to the other world.

In these, and in all the countries civilised by southern Europeans, the Catholic religion has prevailed. This is the creed of the Spanish and the Portuguese settlements; and it is as well adapted to the disposition which must arise out of the natural circumstances of those countries, as any other quality which can be carried from the south to the south. But in the districts which were under the tuition of England, the progress of religion was different. The first establishments were made amid a general dearth of original inhabitants; at a time when the mother country was molested by ultra-reformists. These sects were happy to find a land to which they might fly for protection; and the British were satisfied at beholding an influx of inhabitants generally peaceful and industrious. Difference of religion was little attended to, and the principle was universal toleration. Though this was sometimes violated, as in New England and Virginia, yet the result was to establish at once a greater variety of creeds, and upon a more equal footing, than in any other part of the globe. The progress of this country, compared to that of the Romans, teaches how the most opposite wants may equally tend to produce national prosperity. The want of territory for their population made the Romans brave; the want of population for their territory made the Americans tolerant.

Since the independence of the United States, toleration has been still farther extended; their political constitution prohibits all religious distinctions, all preference or disability arising from faith; the only government—except among the pagans, and but few even of these—which has absolutely made no distinction between creeds, is in the latest, which ought to be the wisest, seat of civilisation.

The political newness, the simplicity, the scanty population, the infant greatness of the United States, may allow the existence of such a system for the present; but whether it is compatible with such a country as they are fast becoming, remains yet to be proved, along with many other novelties, of which they are the earliest example. To deny the possibility of unwitnessed success would be illiberal folly; to credit, upon mere speculation, the contrary of

what has yet been seen, would be imprudence. The chances, however, are much in favour of the system.

The prevailing religion of the United States is, however, Christianity; and its modifications there are generally the simplest. The reformed churches of every description, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Dutch reformists, Quakers, Methodists, Moravians, Lutherans, and Calvinists, of every shade and country, abound. Some of the States have retained the creeds which were communicated to them by the first settlers; and though the Protestant religion was established there by law, in 1692, the majority of the population is Catholic. Be it, however, the result of the early settlements, or a consequence of natural circumstances, or of both, it is certain that the simplest forms of worship are more frequent in the northern, and the more pompous in the southern provinces. Thus the proportion of what, in England, would be called dissenters, is greater in Vermont, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, than in New England; and still greater in the latter State than in South Carolina. But it must be left to time to teach us more respecting this nation.

The history of mankind, then, sufficiently demonstrates the theory of religion enounced in this chapter; and shows that, abstracting a few accidental deviations, pious religion is the lot of proud, imaginative religion of vain nations. In the beginning, indeed, religion which, from the immediate instructions of the Divinity, was, in some measure, exempted from the common law of human qualities, inclined to be pious. But it soon followed the universal tendency, and, in the fertile countries first inhabited, became allied with vanity. Among barbarians, whose fancies everywhere outstrip their reason, religion was imaginative. But in the regions where the category of qualities derived from easily attained prosperity prevail, its characteristics were luxury and pomp. Where great natural difficulties are to be surmounted, where the sky is boisterous, and the earth austere, severity was the leading feature; the passions were harsh, not voluptuous; and sensual pursuits. The

but the creed was not more rational. As social improvement advanced in the latter, religion became more pious; while, in the former, it remained imaginative. Thus, in their early state, both Asia and Europe were plunged in fantastic creeds; but Asia adhered to her belief, or exchanged it for another as corrupt; while Europe, in her first period of civilisation, gave a greater shade of piety to the mythology of Egypt, and, in her second, adopted and preserved the only faith which is truly pious. Corruption crept in, indeed; and the early luxury of Rome invented errors, which the later civilisation of Saxony, Switzerland, Holland, Britain, was not then ripe enough to correct. But, as the North advanced, abuses were reformed by the proudest portion of that people; while the vainest have retained their imaginative creeds. The New World is less sensual than Asia, but more vain than Europe; and, in its most fertile regions, the most imaginative creeds have been adopted, while the more pious have prevailed in the less productive provinces.

While Asia alone was inhabited, imaginative religion was predominant, and continued to be so while mankind was ignorant. As pride, as civilisation increased, some approximations were made to better feelings. But, as the best instruction which men could, of themselves, attain was insufficient, revelation came to their assistance. Then the whole order of religious sentiments was changed. Imagination lost its exclusive supremacy, by every addition of European reason. The education given by this continent to America still further diminished it; and, at this hour, a large and growing portion of mankind is pious. That piety has increased, is certain; that it will increase, can little be doubted. Christianity is less likely to retrograde than pride or civilisation; and though Asia has given proof that it may decline, such a decay is not to be apprehended in America. New England is less luxurious than Thibet; Peru less sensual than Hindostan. Nay, a hope may be entertained that, at some future day, but little distant when compared with the probable duration of the human race, the voluptuous regions of the old continent,

abjuring their imaginative creeds, may imbibe the feelings of piety; and that, even should they not become entirely proud, or entirely civilised, they may be filled not only with Christians, but with Christians of the least imaginative sects.

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### PART III.

On the Reaction of the Different Modifications of Religion upon the Characters of Nations.

THE advantages and the disadvantages of pious and imaginative religion may be easily estimated.

The nation which has always shown itself the most perverse and obstinate in adhering to imaginative worship, is that which has suffered the most on account of its religion. Before the foundation of the Jewish monarchy, that people had spent a wearisome time in servitude; the sad effect of their persevering adherence to imaginative religion. In the time of the kings they enjoyed, indeed, much apparent prosperity; though idolatrous; but the might of David, the magnificence of Solomon, were the forerunners and the signs of the corruption of the people. A division of the empire ensued; the ten tribes adopted the idolatry of the Egyptians; and, even in Judah, the religion was altered. But the consequence was the plunder of the temple by the very nation whose gods had defiled their worship. Idolatry soon became more frequent, and the misery and the reverses of the nation multiplied. The Philistines and the Arabians plundered Judah. Hazael, king of Assyria, subdued both kingdoms but a few years after the worship of Baal had been introduced. Six years after Ahaz had placed in the temple of Jerusalem an altar, copied from the altars of Damascus, and sacrificed holocausts there, Salmanazar laid waste the kingdom of Israel, and led the Israelites into Nineveh. In vain did the people under sometimes return to the true religion; th



remain in it. But the destruction of the army of Sennacherib by an angel, in one night, while the nation, under the good Hezekiah, had given up idolatry, is a proof that they might still have been successful. Many bad reigns, however, succeeded, and Nebuchadnezzar inflicted upon them a seventy years' captivity. Their temple was pillaged, the walls of the city were destroyed, and the Jewish empire was overthrown.

When the Jews returned from Babylon, they seemed to have acquired wisdom from their misfortunes, but they never rose to power again; they existed rather as a religious than as a political community; and, though a little reformed, they often paid the forfeit of their former idolatry, till, after a series of unheard of calamities, they finally perpetrated the most signal crime ever committed by man, and met with the most signal punishment ever inflicted on a nation.

The nations that first professed imaginative religions were the greatest then known, but their social progress was in luxury; the vices which are always attached to barbarism were supplanted by the vices of sensuality; they acquired splendor, power, and riches, and filled the entire space which history then occupied. But they were far from being happy, and their whole existence was a scene of comfortless magnificence; the regions of intellect were left uncultivated, or thinly peopled with beings of imagination; sensibility was lost in physical enjoyments, and the general feelings of good were smothered in individual gratifications; great empires arose and were destroyed; numerous hosts were led by luxurious chiefs, and armies fought in gold and jewels, mingled with the steel of war. The contest was between effeminacy struggling with effeminacy, and victory led to extirpation. A community of states, a rivalry of nations were as little known as the liberties of subjects; and of the great monarchies which, by the cheerless vicissitudes of imagination where nothing is stable, successively wielded the power of Asia, it seemed impossible that two should exist together. Babylonians, Chaldeans, Assyrians, Medes, Persians, succeeded each other, as murderers and

usurpers seated themselves upon the throne of the sovereign whom they had killed. At length a nation, taught by the Egyptians the use of imaginative religion, but instructed by natural circumstances to make the creed a little less disgusting, overran them all; and the regions where these mighty powers had grown and were destroyed, became the prey to Macedonian generals, who worshipped less fantastic gods, and whose mythology was less extravagant.

The happiness diffused among the Greeks was greater than that enjoyed by any Asiatic nation. Men were considered by them as of superior value, and remained in the possession and practice of a greater portion of their natural rights. But they rose into still higher estimation when the Roman republic burst into existence, more pious than its predecessors.

But the entire superiority of pious forms of worship can be measured only by the contemplation of Christian countries. The progress which all of them have made in virtue, knowledge, and happiness, places them at an immeasurable distance before the rest of the world, and has incredibly abridged the period of their labours to become prosperous. Yet even there, the fancies of men have been tinctured with imagination. The nations in which it has been the most perverted, certainly are not the most advanced in civilisation; the Asiatic and the African borders of the Mediterranean have not the wisdom or the happiness of Italy. Italy, enjoying many of the flowers which adorn the social state, wants many of the vigorous shoots which do honour to the forests of the North. Spain, happy in the expulsion of infidels, wretched by her political state, has neither the power nor the consideration in the world to which her natural resources entitle her. France, if national prosperity be not inversely as the means employed and the end obtained—if the quantity of useless blood, compared with the truth and liberty which it has cemented, be any measure of national worth, is less to be admired than many smaller realms. By the same rules, Britain is the most enviable of empires. The most protestant of nations, she has made her power the greatest with the smallest expen-

diture of life, and has secured the freest government and the most pious creed. Scotland, where that creed is the simplest and the least imaginative, is still more moral and enlightened, and domestic happiness is more general. Ireland, the least pious, is the least happy portion of the realm. In Switzerland the pious are more flourishing than the imaginative cantons. Throughout the world the law is general, and every apparent exception admits of an easy explanation.

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## CHAPTER VI.

## ON MORALITY.

## PART I.

On the Causes which develop and modify Morality among Nations.

THE faculty by which man feels the difference between right and wrong is innate in his nature.

To this great fundamental truth it has been objected, that, if the faculty were innate, men would agree upon its conclusions, and that the same actions would be held in the same estimation by all persons. But here the feeling is mistaken for a function which this faculty, united to many others, performs, when it pronounces upon the rectitude of human actions. The feeling is innate and universal ; but its modes are different, according to the circumstances by which it is excited. The moral sense feels that right and wrong must exist. It is pleased with the former, and shocked by the latter ; but reflection decides what it is that is right, and what it is that is wrong. It judges between them, and often says that what is good in one instance, may in another be evil.

The general theory of morality is comprised in the old and trite proverb, ‘ Idleness is the mother of vice ;’ its peculiarities, however, require some investigation.

As religion teaches the duty which we owe to the Creator, morality comprehends our duty to his creatures, and is the unwritten code by which the species is bound together in reciprocal obligations. Wherever men are conscious of their mutual dependency, these obligations are more strongly felt ; and the circumstances which impress upon them the necessity of union, inspire them with the justest notions of virtue. Difficulties to be overcome are the best sources of

the moral code; they instruct us, that the qualities which are really useful to mankind are positive and practical, not capricious or theoretical, and impose upon us their daily exercise, without variety or interruption.

But where the wants of men are too easily provided for, leisure is afforded for idleness, and no check inspires human beings with the desire of establishing rules for the benefit of all.

Morality, then, is moulded into two distinct modifications, according as the natural circumstances under which men unite give a character of choice or of necessity to their union. In difficulties, such as may be overcome by the joint efforts of society, more advantageously than by the divided attempts of individuals, morality is grounded upon general principles; under the influence of favourable natural circumstances it is made subservient to local, partial, or incidental wants. In the former case it is absolute; in the latter, purely conventional.

In the same manner, then, as self-approbation is modified into pride and vanity, and social improvement into civilisation and luxury, and religion into the pious and the imaginative—so is morality modified into the absolute and the conventional. The former belongs to the category of national qualities issuing from the same source as pride; the latter is as firmly connected with vanity.

Pride, indeed, which cannot exist without the approbation of conscience, cannot admit of any but absolute principles; while vanity may establish rules arising out of accidents and convenience, and fluctuating with the particular fancies of luxurious men. Neither could civilisation adopt any system of morality of which reason would not approve, though luxury would tolerate all that sensuality could dictate. As to religion, it is useless to state any proofs of the connexion which subsists between its modifications and those of the present subject; or to demonstrate that devotion and absolute morality, imagination and conventional morality are, and must be, inseparable.

Absolute morality corresponds with the acts which are considered as *mala in se*, things really bad in their own

natures; while conventional morality relates to the *mala prohibita*, as specified by the laws of men. The former comprises all the ill which even a state of nature would proscribe, as militating against the human race. The latter comprehends the codes which the refinement, true or false, of society has made necessary, and which tend to its better regulation. The jurisdiction of the former is more defined and circumscribed; but the latter extends to all the progress which men have made in civilisation, and still more in luxury.

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## PART II.

On the Development and Progress of the different Modifications of Morality among Nations.

OF all the elements which compose the characters of nations, the most difficult to be appreciated is morality. The exploits of armies are carefully recorded; laws are engraved on tables of brass, and government may be appreciated by every transaction between sovereigns and subjects: but morality consists in such a multiplicity of details, that it is beyond the power of history to give a just picture of its condition.

One of the principal obstacles to this inquiry is, the inaccuracy of language. The same word, written with the same letters, pronounced with the same intonations, does not convey the same idea to two minds, whose feelings are not alike. Nothing, for instance, can appear more definite than the term virtue; yet, in Asia, this may denote submission; in Europe, resistance; to Mussulmen, war; to Christians, peace. Honour, too, which its votaries describe as one and incorruptible, assumes various significations. In some countries it prescribes revenge for an injury received; in others, forgiveness. Here the violation of female chastity is a disgrace; there it is a duty. Every such expression must have as many meanings as there are characters; and, before the morality of a nation can be judged of, it is indispensable to know the precise import of the terms by which it is described.

Another difficulty is, that prejudices often stand in the place of principles. The preference which every nation gives to its own system is partly founded on the former, assisted, indeed, by local wants. In truth, the most moral nation is that which most strictly observes the best system of absolute morality, modified only by such conventional precepts as arise out of partial necessities.

It might be thought that public registers of crimes, where such are kept, would give some insight into this subject; but all that is wrong is not, in every time and place, considered as a crime. In some countries not only individual actions, but even institutions, are tolerated which militate against the very existence of the human race.

It does not follow that, because unnatural and destructive vices meet with no punishment, they have no place in society. Impunity as frequently proceeds from false estimates of vice as from its rarity, and is often a proof of indifference to virtue. Crimes liable to the rigours of the law must be so few, that they should be laid with caution to the charge of a nation. They are the work of a small number of persons, who, when discovered, are rejected from the condition of citizens. It is impossible to deduce the morality of a nation from the number and the nature of criminal executions, or to conclude that, where a few are extremely corrupt, the majority is equally vicious.

It is a principle with some nations, that crimes are better overlooked than punished, and an unfaithful register appears in place of truth. They preserve the vicious members of the social body, and maintain corruption in the mass, rather than own that they are bad. The proportion of morality in a nation that acts thus, and in another that prefers a bolder and a juster practice, cannot be deduced upon the same principle.

Another error is, to suppose that, when criminal proceedings are public, they vitiate the public mind, and teach the pernicious wiles of depravity. The publication of crimes cannot be considered as a lesson of immorality, unless they are accompanied by impunity. The seductions which sometimes gild the commencements of vice must lose their power,

when their consequences are known to be fatal. The circumstances which attend the perpetration of crimes are sounder characteristics of national propensities, than any of the above. The assassins of some countries kill openly, and meet their victim face to face; in others, they come behind and stab him in the back, or poison the food which he offers to share with them. Criminal calendars keep no account of the arms employed to murder; the law makes no distinction between the sword, the stiletto, and the poisoned chalice: yet men cannot but feel the difference, and a single murder in Italy and Portugal must inspire greater terror than twenty pugilistic deaths in Britain. Laws can punish only the act; the circumstances which attend it must be left to the scourge of public opinion.

Public opinion, indeed, is a very just measure of national morality; crimes are the acts of individuals—opinion is the feeling of the nation. Where this is strongly and justly pronounced, it may fairly be concluded that the sentiment of virtue is powerful, and that its judgments deserve entire confidence. From the admission of this principle, a singular conclusion may be drawn: the nation which raises the greatest outcry against its own morality, and considers itself as standing the most in need of correction and reform, may generally be allowed to be the most moral.

The clamor raised against immorality results from the positive quantity of vice which prevails in society, and from the sensibility which that society manifests in abhorrence of it. Where vice is general, but few remain to detest and revile it; where it is rare, the horror which it excites is extreme, and the dread of its growing influence is increased by every new example.

This assertion is fully proved by the history of the early nations, who, though far from being virtuous, rarely complained of their own depravity. It is probable, indeed, that simplicity was by them called morality, and much of their boasted virtues may be reduced to the ignorance of refined vices; but ruder offences were common—~~chastity~~ and nature were little respected. One single ~~virtue~~ but one, seems to have been more generally pract



at present—hospitality. But that virtue was particularly recommended by necessity, at a time when no regular receptacles were established for travellers; besides, the character of the Arabians is sufficient to prove that it is compatible with every vice. Its generosity is indiscriminate and wild, until, by the accession of enlightened feelings, it becomes matured into a more benevolent practice.

The morality of all barbarians is conventional. The Egyptians, who certainly were not the worst of the early nations, were yet infected with very dreadful vices; in trade they could not be trusted; the commerce between the sexes stood upon the most licentious footing; and their history is full of scandalous anecdotes, attended by circumstances which attest their generality. Abraham was in perpetual apprehension lest the beauty of his wife should instigate some man to murder him, and he escaped only by introducing her as his sister. The stories of Potiphar and of Pharaoh are further examples of Egyptian morals. The Assyrians were more deeply impregnated with the vices of luxury than the Egyptians; and their monarchs, until the extinction of the empire under Sardanapalus, were monsters of debauchery. Concubinage, incest, murder, were committed daily, and excited no horror. The Babylonians were still more depraved; and the duty of prostitution imposed upon women, pains, by a single stroke, the principles of that luxurious empire. The Medes carried still farther, if possible, the vices of luxury and effeminacy; and the Persians were not much inferior to the Medes. In all these nations morality, if such it can be called, was conventional, and the common characteristic of their vices was luxury, not ferocity.

The practices of the Jews from the earliest times were such as the worst of modern empires could not tolerate. Unnatural vices were openly avowed: when Judah, the worthiest of the children of Jacob, had, by mistake, committed incest with his daughter-in-law, Tamar, it does not appear that his remorse was so great as that of the profane Œdipus, upon an occasion somewhat similar. When Laban deceived his neighbour by substituting Leah in the place of Rachel, he unblushingly proposed to conclude another bar-

gain with him for the daughter whom the services of Jacob had already won. At the most solemn ceremony of the Jewish religion, the circumcision of converts, the sons of the patriarch murdered all the males of Sichem, together with the repentant ravisher, in treacherous revenge for the rape of their sister Dinah. The children of Jacob were the perpetual scourges of their father, by their ingratitude to him, and their enmity to each other. Neither had he himself lived on better terms with Esau; and the treachery of Rebecca had deprived the first-born of his right.

When the Jews were settled in the land of promise, they added many new vices to those which they carried with them from Egypt, and their whole conduct evinced a levity mingled with atrocity peculiarly characteristic of a morality which is but conventional. To the very moment of their destruction, during their various captivities and misfortunes, their immorality never diminished, except when some returning gleams of pious religion occasionally brightened their habitual idolatry.

The morals of the Greeks, during the heroic ages, have been represented as particularly pure and simple; yet it is easy, amid the praises bestowed on them, to discern the reverse. The customs of ordinary life, the rules of politeness were prescribed by the gods; yet this people, though ceremonious, were ferocious, unprincipled, always armed to commit or to repel violence. The moral virtue had no name, and vice no punishment. During these ages flourished Danaus, Thyestes, Egistus, Theseus, Atreus, Eteocles, Alceon, Orestes, Eryphile, Phædra, Clytemnestra, &c. The little kingdom of Argos was the scene of more iniquity than can here be told. Among the heroes who marched against Troy to revenge the affront offered to Menelaus, there was hardly one who had not to complain of a similar injury. Few of their wives were chaster than Helen, and some had committed murder. The poetical picture of early Greece, then drawn by the hand of simplicity, is little in favor of its morality, neither were the Greeks very clamorous as to the depravity of their countrymen.

In a more advanced period, the refined Athenians had

acquired many new virtues, not altogether unaccompanied by new vices. When the successes of Aristides, of Cimon, of Pericles, had increased their wealth and their dominions, this people sunk into every species of luxury. Their religious ceremonies were more pompous than those of any other Grecian city; the pleasures of the table were indulged in to excess; the men became effeminate, and the women harlots. Athens was more flourishing than she had ever been before, but she contained a greater contrast of good and bad than could be exemplified in any other country. The glowing sophistry of Hippias, Protagoras, Prodicus, Gorgias—the barren doctrines of Leucippus and Democritus—the sensuality of Epicurus—the scepticism of Pyrrho, had numerous disciples in the same city where the sublime philosophy of Anaxagoras and of Socrates was taught. The buffoonery and impiety of Aristophanes attracted as many admirers as the pathetic and moral strains of Sophocles and Euripides. Where Phidias and Alcamenes were carving rival statues of Minerva, inferior artists gained equal fame by prostituting their pencils to obscenity. The penury of private life was contrasted with the magnificence and dissipation of public festivals; the meagre comforts of the poor, with the sumptuousness of the great; the dissolute school of Aspasia, with the modesty of Athenian wives; and the habitual amenity of the people, with their cruelty to their best benefactors. It was in this city, too, that the treasury was plundered by the men who guarded it, and afterwards burned by them to conceal their theft. It was in Athens that, when Solon was preparing to give his countrymen the best laws which they were able to bear, some of his friends, knowing that his intention was to abolish debts, borrowed large sums of money. If such were the friends of this great lawgiver, what were not the other citizens?

After the Peloponnesian war morals were still further corrupted. Six thousand Athenians were employed in deciding lawsuits, and absorbed one-sixth part of the revenues in legal remunerations and in bribes. The most worthless citizens stood at the head of every department of the state. The sons of Charephilus, a celebrated cook, received, as a reward

for the talents of their father, the freedom of that city once so jealous of its rights. Though attached in the extreme to show, poverty reduced the people to filth and squalidness. To retrieve their calamities, the social war was undertaken, in the intent of plundering from their allies and colonies the necessary sums for their own pleasures; and Chares, who had advised the measure, became the idol of Athens. Thucydides says that the word of no Grecian could be relied on, and that, if ever truth were uttered, it was but to deceive. The sole occupation of the magistrates was to regulate the public festivals, to crown the tragic poets at the theatre, and to ordain processions. The fund, originally intended to defray the expenses of the war, was appropriated to the theatre, and a law proposed by Eubulus made it death for any person to change its destination. The eloquence of Demosthenes could not bring his countrymen back to virtue; the armies of Philip could not alarm them into patriotism; they expired in pleasure and voluptuousness; and, though their dying song was sweet, their end was contemptible.

The morals of Sparta more systematically deviated from absolute rules than those of Athens. Every institution in the country of Lycurgus was artificial; and no community upon earth had done so much to frustrate Nature in all her operations. Severe to themselves, the Lacedæmonians became cruel to others. Lest the Helots should forget that obedience was their duty, they were flogged occasionally without motive; and if one of them showed any talent which might make a Spartan jealous, he was put to death. Public as well as private property, these unhappy wretches never could recover their freedom. 'At Athens,' says Xenophon, 'the Lacedæmonians massacred a greater number of persons in eight months of peace, than war had consumed in thirty years.' At the festival in honour of Diana, Spartan children were beaten with rods, until the blood flowed down their bodies; and mothers smiled when told that their sons had died in battle. Female chastity was prohibited by law, and discouraged by practice; public baths and public games were instituted, where the sexes met together free from the constraint of

strictest observance of the most conventional morality can constitute a moral people, the Lacedæmonians were the most virtuous men of Greece, until the victories of Lysander made them powerful and degenerate. Then all their austerity was at an end; instead of Spartan broth, the most sumptuous fare was served at their tables, accompanied by the most delicious wines. Their hardy exercises gave way to effeminate indulgences, and they were not to be known as the sons of Leonidas, as soon as nature was allowed to operate uncontrolled.

The morals of the Romans and of the Grecians were as different as all the other qualities of those nations. The first vices of Romulus were violence and ferocity, and his empire was established by many iniquitous actions. His general policy, however, was to neglect no opportunity of impressing his countrymen with a respect for virtue. Their attachment to it continued during the reigns of most of the kings, who generally encouraged it, and their institutions had a constant tendency to that end.

A proof that the morality of the Romans had undergone no diminution during the monarchy, was the indignation which they felt at the vices that dared to show themselves under Tarquin. Such always is the effect of depravity upon minds which are proud and pious; the contemplation of evil strengthens them in good. That Roman virtue then was as sincere as it was great, is evident from its success; for had it been assumed, or confined to a few, it never could have expelled the family of Tarquin. It was not the little band of senators who saluted as king the assassin of his father, or the knot of despicable conspirators who joined with the ambassadors of Etruria in a plot to ruin the liberties of their country, that could stand against the general virtue. The single voice of Brutus was more effectual; and, when it called upon the nation for assistance, it was obeyed more than all the allurements of luxury. The Roman people derived much of their subsequent devotedness from the severe justice of the father condemning his own sons. Had they not been already virtuous, the example would have disgusted them, and the deed which then

was heroism, would have been wanton barbarity. When Brutus gave his last commands to the lictors, he calculated that the virtues of his countrymen made them fit to be republicans, and he estimated them rightly. Whenever vice appeared among them at this time, it was overbalanced by a much greater weight of good qualities ; for the catalogue of virtues which Rome could show, could not be surpassed by any heathen, and but by few Christian nations.

The respect paid to oaths in early Rome was extreme. When Cincinnatus proposed to lead the armies against the Volsci and the Equi, the tribunes declared they would oppose the levy of troops. The consul replied that he wanted none, because the citizens, when they took up arms, swore not to lay them down until permitted by the consuls. The tribunes objected that, when the oath was taken, Cincinnatus was a private man. But the people, more conscientious than their magistrates, regarded the objection as evasive, and returned to their banners. In every instance where a man swore to enlist, and not to desert his colours, disobey his commander, or fly from his enemy ; when a private citizen reported, on oath, the amount of his taxable property, the state believed him, and was rarely deceived. Parricide was a crime unknown, though the authority of parents was absolute. Husbands had unlimited power to repudiate their wives in certain cases ; yet nearly six centuries elapsed without an instance of divorce. The first which occurred was in the decline of morality, when the censors compelled the citizens to marry, in the intent of furnishing children to the republic ; and Carvilius Ruga, whose wife was barren, was forced, much against his inclination, to repudiate her. Divorces became more frequent as morals became depraved.

A measure of public opinion upon the subject of morality may be deduced from the degree of despair to which criminals are reduced by being cut off from the hope of readmission into society ; that is to say, from the severity of the line drawn between vice and virtue. This criterion is particularly correct with regard to the virtues, the infraction of which is not generally amenable to law, but which are as

completely blasted by defamation as if condemned by legal evidence. The reserve, the timidity, the susceptibility which are the guardians of female chastity, are no less precious than chastity itself. Such was the feeling of Rome as long as morals were pure ; but, when they became generally corrupt, the continence of women was held in no estimation. Female virtue could not survive the general morals of the state. In the monarchy it was austere and respectable, and the violation of it was cause sufficient to overturn the government. In the republic it was still honored, though exposed to vicissitudes. After the sedition of Gracchus it was no longer revered, and the great corrupters of the people, Sylla, Cæsar, &c., did what they could to undermine it. Under the empire it was entirely forgotten, and nothing reminded the women or the men that such beings as Roman matrons ever had existed. Since that period it has, like all other Roman virtues, sunk into utter decay, and is retrievable only at a period which cannot now be foreseen, when pride shall return again to the city of Lucretia.

Roman probity long continued unimpeachable in the administration of public property. The largest sums were entrusted to generals, magistrates, and legates, and none were ever known to have embezzled them. An oath was sufficient to restrain them, and the people gave as full credit to their word as to an attested contract. But, among the great men of Athens, this virtue was rare, and few could be named, even in the time of Solon, who had not some reproach to make to their honesty.

In the falling commonwealth of Rome, public clamor against vice must not be considered in the same light as it may be beheld in nations not in their decline. The number of the corrupt had increased beyond all bounds, but the mass of the indignant, though loud, was small. No moral situation gives rise to such severe reproaches as that of a nation, once virtuous, but which is beginning to plunge into depravity. The few who escape the general contagion possess the most energetic souls, and feel and speak with the most undisguised contempt. But the few must always



be distinguished from the many. In dictatorial Rome the multitude was corrupt, and the exceptions to general depravity were the only men who exclaimed. They emitted the last coruscations of expiring worth, while all around was darkness, and the contrast made them more remarkable. When the city became imperial, all were silent because all were depraved, and the worst of the emperors were those against whom no man declaimed, because no man was virtuous. Although their religious feelings were stronger, and their doctrines purer than those of the Greeks, yet the time was not yet come when absolute morality was founded on the only basis which ever can support it, and the world still wanted the Christian revelation.

No sooner was this great guide of conscience known than the morals of mankind underwent a total change. The virtues which once were considered as sublime, lost their false magnificence. Pagan religions, assisted by pagan philosophy, had accomplished little more than to raise a few exceptions from the common level of men, to dazzling heights. But Christianity instructed the whole species, for its simplicity made it comprehensible to every man, and its duties were not beyond the reach of daily exercise.

The improvement of morals was at first confined to the followers of the new religion who, surrounded by persecutors, persevered in the exercise of their faith without deviation, and compelled their enemies to own that the tenor of their lives was a sufficient answer to the charges brought against their creed. Some of the most respectable names of antiquity bear evidence in their favor. Pliny the younger, proconsul in Bithynia, informing the Emperor Trajan of their general conduct in that province, represents them in terms which could not suit any other men. He says that not one of them could be compelled by threats or tortures to abjure. ‘On stated days,’ he adds, ‘they meet before the dawn to praise their Saviour; to bind themselves by an oath not to do any wicked thing; to injure no man; to commit no thefts, robberies, adulteries; to break no promise; to refuse to give back no pledge.’ Antoninus Pius also deposes in favour of their conduct in his time.



But, as the countries where Christianity was first promulgated were not the most proper for its preservation, so neither were they the most favorable to its pure and absolute morality; and the mixture of pagan tenets disgraced it in Asia, Africa, and the south of Europe. The traces of many prejudices may be found not only in the general learning of those countries, but in their moral doctrines; and, in proportion as time removed them from the Apostles and the first disciples of Christ, they became more perverted.

When the northern portions of Europe received the faith, they had been labouring under the barbarous and ferocious creed of the ancient Druids, or under the more recent extravagances of Odin. Their morality was as conventional as their religion was imaginative, and both were tinged with as much ignorance as any which prevailed in southern latitudes. Before absolute morality could assume its due proportions there, a great development of reason was necessary to prepare its way. It is not surprising, then, that its best fruits were not immediately tasted, but that several ages elapsed before the most enlightened portion of the world enjoyed the full benefits which it so abundantly promised.

It is not, however, in the most fertile parts of Europe, in those which first heard the doctrines of Christian morality, that it is now the purest. The country in which the throne of St. Peter has long been fixed is one of the least moral—one where the collective character is the most degraded. The history of Italy, from the time when the republic began to decline, is an uninterrupted picture of vice, and the indignation of the Italians was never duly roused against their own depravity. A few of their historians and moralists do, indeed, exclaim against it, and thus confirm the fact. It is melancholy to see the nations who were the first founders of great empires in the regions of indigenous civilisation, and the first European disciples of Christ, now shrunk and diminished in all their pretensions, except to past renown, tamely submitting to present ignominy, upon the memory of departed fame, and in every thing the contrast of their former eminence.

The Spaniards, situated more like the Greeks and the Italians than any other people of Europe, have not yet lost so many of their national virtues. The various hardships which they have more lately undergone have impressed them with feelings of pride, of which even the Romans have long since lost every trace ; and in their character meanness finds no place. Their word may be relied upon, and their probity is proof against temptation. They meet an enemy face to face ; and if, in the impetuosity of anger, they have an injury to revenge, or an offence to wipe away, they do not stab in the dark, or poison the cup of confidence and cordiality. The grandeur of the individual Spaniard is as complete a contrast to the debility of his country, as the past is to the present state of Greece and Rome. Even were the number of crimes the same in Spain as in Italy or Greece, the morality of these nations would be unfairly estimated by such a criterion. The boldness, the magnanimity, the generosity of the one, the subtlety, the perfidy, the general meanness and corruption of the others, would elude arithmetical computation.

As we proceed toward Switzerland and Germany, morality assumes a better aspect, and becomes more absolute as it has encountered greater difficulties. In such of the Swiss cantons, and of the German states, as profess the most pious of the Christian communions, the general mass of morality is purer than where the creed is more imaginative. What the proportion of crimes committed in Saxony, for instance, compared with the neighbouring Catholic states, may be, cannot be given upon grounds sufficiently authentic ; but many reasons support the opinion that it is much less considerable in the former. Of this, however, there is every certainty,—the Saxons are a more moral people than the Bohemians, the Bavarians, or the Austrians, and preserve considerable frankness in the midst of rather too much ceremony.

Still farther to the North, in Sweden and Denmark. absolute morality increases, together with greater natural difficulties. As Russia forms an exception to north

European nations in self-approbation, in social improvement, and in religion, so it does in national morality.

From a comparative statement of the crimes committed in England and France, and still more of the punishments inflicted, it would almost appear that morality was less pure and absolute in the Protestant than in the Catholic country ; but such an inference would be altogether erroneous.

In the first place, the laws of England and France do not weigh equally upon all offences. Many actions are considered in the former as deserving the highest punishment, which, in the latter, are hardly cognisable to justice. In the Code Napoleon, unnatural crimes are not even mentioned, unless committed with violence. Capital executions are less frequent in France ; theft, and even murder, have many means of evading death, as well by the letter as by the spirit of the law ; while in England they can hope to escape it but by some attenuating circumstances, which may induce the mercy of the sovereign to commute the penalty. The legal import assigned to what is construed premeditation in either country, may put this in a clearer light. In England, the slightest indication of thought is sufficient to destroy the plea of sudden impulse. In France, unless a murderer is proved to have brooded over his crime for an almost infinite period, he is acquitted of premeditation, and condemned to reclusion, not to death. It is remarkable that the nation whose habitual reflection is the least, should allow the longest time for criminals to meditate with impunity upon the perpetration of evil.

Another reason for not placing confidence in French lists of crimes and punishments, is the establishment of an institution for which the public mind is not yet fitted—the trial by jury. The reasons which, in France, destroy the value of this great engine of security and justice are too numerous to be quoted, but they may be reduced to three principal causes.

1st. The want of independence in the middle class, and their want of instruction and practical sense. 2d. The

absurd mode in which juries are formed. Whoever has paid attention to criminal processes in that country, must agree that the proceedings and the decisions are often such as could hardly be expected in a civilised nation. A third reason is, that the most official documents there do not command implicit confidence. Public feeling does not yet require a faithful statement of existing evils ; and though any member of the legislature may demand the communication of documents, a minister may refuse them. The mass of the French population is not yet convinced that, in a monarchy where ministers, questioned upon the lives and properties of subjects, dare refuse to answer, the loss of liberty is more injurious to the state than the publication of any crimes not quite unpunished.

A fourth reason is, the participation of the French in an opinion which, as previously remarked, is shared by every vain nation—that it is better to leave crimes unpunished, than to punish them too publicly. Nay, so far do they carry this principle, that they generally hold themselves less dishonored when they swear to the innocence of a guilty relation, than when they give him up to chastisement. This prejudice was equally prevalent in the old as in the new government, for it is inherent in vanity.

Whatever be the number of great crimes committed by the French, the few attempts made to purify the mass of society, the puerile pretension of endeavouring to appear better than they really are, and of sacrificing solid virtue for reputation, very much lower the standard of public morals. But none of these causes operate among the British, and the pride of this nation produces effects precisely the reverse of all that has now been stated respecting the inhabitants of France.

1st. The laws of England, as before observed, are, in many cases, more severe than those of France. There is a crime on which public opinion, in the former country, pronounces itself with horror, which, by the law, is death, and of which nothing can wipe away the obloquy, but which, in the latter, is not considered as worthy of animadversion.

There the man who commits it is not even pointed at as a profligate; the Code of Napoleon takes no cognisance of him. To those who have no means of judging national morals by closer inspection than the reports of trials, it would seem that France is more moral than England; but this apparent superiority is, in fact, due to indifference toward vice.

2ndly. The chances of escaping punishment are less in England, consequently, the lists of crimes and punishments come more near to the truth. This may appear incredible to those who are in the habit of admiring the police of France, which could forestall intentions and frustrate evil designs, at the precise moment necessary to procure conviction. In England, an institution which could ask of any man what he was going to do, could not subsist one hour. It is incompatible with political liberty, which Britons wisely prefer to a small addition to their individual repose. Yet the detection of crimes is more certain there than in France, as innumerable instances might prove.

Another reason for a small chance of impunity in England is, the superiority of British juries, more accustomed to discuss truth, more enlightened, more conscientious, more devoutly weighing the evils of unjust condemnation and of impunity. Englishmen turn the entire powers of their mind to such investigations, and, as little as is possible for human beings, allow themselves to be swayed by personal considerations. In the hands of such men, the lives of their fellow-citizens are safe, and the guilty can seldom escape their penetration.

3dly. Official concealment of crime is neither the practice nor the theory of British functionaries, and entire reliance may be placed in the reports submitted to the public. Ministers too well know the impossibility of withholding communications demanded by public opinion. The government, no less than the nation, is convinced of the advantage of publicity, and both know that more danger would accrue from impunity or concealment, than from imparting the documents of national depravity.

4thly. The English are a proud nation, and their ambition is to be moral, rather than to seem so. They know that, whatever be the nature or the number of national crimes, the only way to keep the mass of society pure is to take cognisance of them, and, at the expense of a little reputation, to extirpate corruption wherever it be found.

A further reason why the general morality of the two countries cannot be appreciated by lists of crimes and punishments is, that many circumstances in the situation of England contribute to create extraordinary instances of great offences, which the law severely chastises. But those very circumstances are among the principal contributors to the general morality of the country in other respects. A nation, for instance, engaged in such extensive commercial relations as England, cannot but derive as much advantage from them in morals as in wealth. Commerce, on such a comprehensive scale, can have no basis but confidence, and confidence no foundation but honesty. Yet the hope of rapid gain must naturally tempt a few to speculate beyond their means; and among the victims of adventurous industry, some will yield to the suggestions of dishonest hope, till, at the last, the law overtakes them. Thus the catalogue of crimes is swollen, while the immense additions which universal probity, the basis of commercial confidence, must make to national morality, is overlooked in the list of virtues.

Another cause which modifies the morality of these nations is, the nature of their respective self-approbations. The national morality of pride is a few great crimes, always punished, scattered though a mass undergoing a constant process of purification. The national morality of vanity is a smaller number of daring vices, openly brought to light; but a mass more generally depraved, and too timid to submit to correction or to truth.

The testimony of crimes and punishments, then, would ill decide the question of comparative morality between a proud and a vain nation. An equally fallacious guide

would be, the report which the English and French make of themselves, unless, like the former, it be received with the necessary restrictions.

The sensibility toward the evils of vice is so great, the desire to appear better than the reality, is so small among Englishmen, that every recurrence of crimes awakens the most avowed indignation. In a government so popular as the British, the court is rather an object of distrust than of veneration; its vices are not respected, and the nation is more inclined to censure than admire. But the immorality inseparable from rank and wealth must be greater in a monarchy, however tempered by democracy, than in a republic; and, in a monarchy not so tempered, there would not be so much clamor against it. No country, then, is so disposed, by the nature of its government, to exclaim against its want of virtue as England, though with less reason than any monarchy upon earth, as the freedom of that very government demonstrates.

In England, vice is not embellished by any ornaments, or disguised by any sophistry, and it has no alternative between assuming the most complete duplicity, or showing itself naked and disgusting as it is. But in France no concealment is necessary; the regions bordering on unpunishable depravity, within which all polished nations delight to flutter, are adorned with all that voluptuousness and fashion can give to render them delicious and deceitful. One only thing can make vice intolerable there—vulgarity. Let it be splendid, lofty, and attended by glory—let it soar, not grovel—let it be brave, not timid, and its deformity excites no disgust.

The necessary concealment of vice in England, followed by unexpected detection, often produces an explosion by which the attention of the world is awakened, and the reputation of morality diminished; notoriety is mistaken for frequency, and the loudness of report for its continuance. But in France there is no sudden detection, because there is no long concealment; no explosion disturbs the repose of society, because there was no silence; and national reputation, in

this instance too, is fallacious as a criterion of national morality.

The severity of the line drawn between vice and virtue in England increases the appearance of immorality. As the chance of the vicious for being readmitted into society is small, the state of hopeless excommunication makes them callous to opinion, and almost to punishment. A greater number of hardened wretches dare show themselves there than in countries intrinsically less moral. The pride of an Englishman too, his energetic feelings, expose him to become more corrupt when fallen from virtue than other men, and the recollection of what he has lost imbitters his existence.

But, notwithstanding official lists and documents, it may still be doubted whether the number of crimes really is proportionably greater in England than in France. But what cannot be questioned, and what is of much greater national importance is, that the remaining mass of society is much more pure ; and not only this general superiority has existed in every period of the history of both countries, but examples of French depravity have frequently occurred to which no parallel could be found in that island.

The morality of the New World most strictly follows the same law as in other parts of the earth, and is the most absolute wherever religion is the most pious, and men are the most proud and civilised. In the United States, which were instructed by England, it is purer than in South America, and the districts in which the protestant communions prevail are the most attached to morals.

From this inquiry it results that the morality of early nations was chiefly conventional, but tinged with a peculiar coloring in proportion as each was disposed by natural circumstances to vanity or to pride. In northern regions it was characterised by harshness and austerity ; in the South, by effeminacy and voluptuousness. Asia was more tolerant of the vices of luxury than Greece ; Greece more addicted to them than Rome ; and Scandinavia, Scythia, Germany, Gaul, and Britain were still more fertile in duties founded on physical severities. The most moral of the



great heathen nations was the most pious and the proudest, though none were truly so until the Christian revelation purified the world. But the depravity in which men were plunged at the time when it was promulgated, and the vanity and the vices of the southern countries where it first was taught, were too great to be suddenly subdued. When light broke in upon the regions further removed from the sun, the corruption of religion and of morals roused their indignation. Both were reformed; the most pious of creeds became still more pious, and morality more absolute. In Italy, Spain, and France it remained uncorrected: in Germany, Sweden, Denmark, and Britain it became more positive. From Europe it was diffused over America, each portion of which received its moral education from the countries which were the most capable of communicating suitable instruction.

It has been a practice of every age to lament its own degeneracy, and to exalt the virtues of its forefathers. So general, indeed, has the custom been in all times, that one would be inclined to suppose it to belong to some universal principle of human nature. If age after age, however, had spoken the truth; if every succeeding generation had been worse than the former, in what part of our beings would room have been found to contain the stock of depravity which, long ere this, must have been collected by the accumulation of so many centuries?

Unless the entire condition of the world be less prosperous than it was in the beginning, so essential an element of happiness as morality cannot have declined. Pride, civilisation, piety, have evidently increased; and this is too intimately connected with them to undergo a separate deterioration. The cheerless clamors then, the dreary lamentations which each successive progeny of man has raised, are not the proofs of real degeneracy; they may rather be attributed to an increasing sensibility for virtue; to an anxiety more watchful than before, to prevent the return of vice, and to an ardent wish for further improvement. No man surely will contend that the morals of the most profligate of moderns are not preferable to those of the early

Greeks: yet that nation was far from being the worst of the antients, and a much larger portion of mankind was laboring under still weightier crimes.

That this will long be the tendency of morality, is fairly to be concluded from the present condition of the world. Mankind cannot be conceived stationary; and history shows that, amid the vicissitudes of human affairs, the rise and fall of empires, the disasters of armies, and the wrecks of ambition, it never has been absolutely retrograde. There have, indeed, been periods when the weak sight of mortals may not have perceived its progress; but, to nature and her works no season is lost; no death, no sleep suspend her operations; and the seed will send its shoots above the ground, though we do not see it open in the bosom of the earth. When the Roman empire fell, civilisation was thought to have been arrested; but the silence which followed was the infancy of empires that sprung from the womb of that mighty mother of nations. Before they had learned to lisp in reason, the Goths and the Huns had already penetrated into the shrine of Roman greatness, and carried away the fragments of the glories which they had broken to pieces. Thus Christian morality was imparted to the children of the North. Americans, taught by them, are now anxious to continue the lessons among their own countrymen. India is becoming Christian; and, what Alexander failed to do, what his successors for two thousand years have not attempted, is now advancing under the tuition of the most moral people of Europe.

To the other benefactions which England has bestowed upon the world, the instruction of a fifth continent must be added. Australia is growing up, as North America once did, in Christian morality; and the nations of Polynesia may hope to partake in it. This, then, is not an age which should exclaim against itself: yet none, perhaps, has been more loud in its own disparagement.

In order to make the principles here laid down as undeniable as possible, and to prove the affiliation of the qualities derived from difficult natural circumstances in one category; and, in the other, the connection of those which

belong to easy prosperity, some ampler strictures follow, upon certain vices and virtues which seem particularly to belong to pride or to vanity ; and first let honor be submitted to analysis.

A justly celebrated author, Dr. Paley, has defined the laws of honor to be ‘ a system of rules constructed by ‘ people of fashion, and calculated to facilitate their intercourse with one another, and for no other purpose.’ This definition, however, is incomplete, for the laws of honor are daily invoked by many who have no claim to be called persons of fashion. A more comprehensive definition would be, ‘ Honor is the virtue of the vain.’ Either definition is sufficient to show that the code of honor contains nothing positive, and that it is entirely conventional ; while virtue is the most absolute morality.

The influence of virtue and honor upon the conduct of men is frequently supposed to be the same, and a man of honor is often held in equal estimation with a man of virtue. That, in many instances, this may be true, cannot be denied. A promise is made and fulfilled ; a purse of untold gold is returned as it was entrusted. These actions may be equally the result of honor as of virtue ; and, as long as the effects alone are considered, they may be held in the same light ; but when the motives of human conduct are to be scrutinized, it becomes of the utmost importance to make the necessary distinctions.

As the voice of God is to the voice of man, so is the influence of virtue to the influence of honor. He who, from the love of virtue, faithfully keeps a secret, or returns a deposit, has a much more solid motive than he who acts well merely out of honor, and affords a greater security for his future conduct. Why, then, have recourse to a weaker cause, or appeal to the judgment of men, when religious and moral considerations unite to lead us so much more forcibly to what is right ? Surely, as in mathematical quantities, the infinitely little may be neglected without error ; and it must follow that, in all cases where these sentiments coincide, honor is a useless monitor.

This, however, is the most favorable point of view in

which the subject can be placed ; for none would presume to say that, whenever they disagree, the preference is not to be given to virtue. A promise is made to steal, to murder, or to do any action which virtue reprobates. Does the person exist who would maintain that such a promise should not be broken, or that so feeble a consideration can be put in competition with the perpetration of the criminal act? Yet a breach of promise implies a breach of honor, and here it becomes a duty. No case can be supposed in which, when virtue and honor are at variance, the latter should not be sacrificed ; and what Omar answered to Amru concerning the Alexandrian library compared to the Koran, may be better applied in the present instance : ‘ If honor coincide with virtue it is useless : if it differ, it is pernicious.’

The practice of the world, however, has not been according to this doctrine, particularly among the moderns. Honor has been allowed to bear a sway over human conduct which it is not worthy to maintain. But a still greater evil results from admitting its influence when in opposition to virtue.

Two examples may be adduced—duelling and gaming. These are provinces which honorable men have placed most particularly under the care of their tutelary divinity, and where, indeed, it is almost the only arbiter. According to them, the man who complies with the laws of honor in a duel, wipes out all the offences which he may ever have committed towards his capricious deity. He may atone for an outrage by the murder of the man he has injured, and satisfy his conscience by reflecting that, if he is a villain, none shall dare to tell him so. Though this abuse is more prevalent in vain than in proud nations, yet, in whatever climate he may dwell, the man who, when law and honor offer equal redress, embraces the latter, is more generally applauded than if he had peaceably resorted to the laws of the land.

With regard to gaming—as legislators have prescribed no rules for the better organisation and more commodious practice of vice, the great number of persons who resort to in such cases

is here most absolute, and the first principle is, that a debt of honor has precedence of every other obligation. That a man is bound to pay a gambling debt cannot be disputed, however strong might have been his previous duty not to have contracted it; but that the claim of a tradesman is less binding, cannot be admitted. The man of honor maintains, that the winner had actually risked his property for the chance of an advantage, and would have given it up had fortune decided the hazard against him. But the tradesman had not merely risked his property, he had delivered it upon a fair speculation, in which chance was no element. The man of honor says, in the second place, that as the legislature affords no compulsory means to recover a gaming debt, while every protection is given to the tradesman, the obligation is more sacred. But why did the legislature omit the means of enforcing the payment of a debt of honor? Is it not because gambling is a vicious practice, subversive of morals, and ruinous to the health, heart and intellect of all who devote themselves to it? And shall this deity of the vain be placed above the wisdom of enlightened legislators? Shall it put chance in competition with certainty, as a rule of equity, and compare what the law would not, with what it could not ordain? And what name shall that principle bear which would make men unjust, in order to make them honorable?

Another instance of the abuse of honor may be found in the conduct of those unfortunate wretches whose crimes have driven them from the protection of the law, and who confederate together to live by depredation. It is the duty of every one among them to break the bond which unites them, inasmuch as their obligation to society is more powerful than their own illicit compact. Besides this too, there is not one who, by betraying his associates to justice, might not secure his own impunity; and the lives of all are in the power of each. Neither, in their private disputes, dare they appeal to any tribunal beyond their own haunts, and litigations must be adjusted among themselves, by their own authority.

Nothing, surely, can be more frail than a society thus

held together ; yet, to the very great annoyance of the world, many such do subsist, united by the most desperate and vicious point of honor.

It may now be asked whether any thing can be adduced in favor of this same honor which has so great an influence among men, and which, by some nations, has been almost deified. Undoubtedly so much admiration could not have been paid to it had it not been found to procure some advantages.

Certain dispositions and intellects can be moved only by what is tangible, and to them the dread of future punishment is too remote to be efficacious. The apprehension of some more proximate scourge is necessary to restrain them ; and, as honor is always present, as its chastisements are always apparent, it may be useful in correcting them. But what a melancholy scene is that where fancy is the rule of conduct, and positive duties are neglected in deference to capricious obligations ! The most that can be said in favor of honor is, that, in the absence of all other ties, it is better that men should act as a check upon each other, than be left without any restraint upon their passions.

An argument has been drawn in favor of honor from a certain class of actions, which however do not properly acknowledge its jurisdiction ; and it has been praised as a supplement to the law in cases which written injunctions cannot reach. The law, for instance, very wisely neglects to compel an enlarged bankrupt to further restitution to his creditors, should he at any time be in a condition to acquit himself, well knowing that no man labours heartily when the first produce of his exertion is not to be his own. By leaving to his free will, and to the best feelings of his nature, to complete his obligations, it encourages rather than daunts his industry, and its lenity rather promotes the ends which severity might have frustrated. But what is the sentiment upon which the law here founds its silence ? Some maintain it to be honor : but are not honesty, justice, equity, stronger guides ? and will men who know what these are ever appeal to honor ? The most peremptory duty of absolute morality is to supply the deficiencies of the law

whenever, out of indulgence to human frailty, that organ has been silent.

Honor, as here understood, is a modern invention, and descends from an order of things and a condition of society which, though useful in their day, are now superseded by better institutions. Chivalry, which grew out of the boisterous spirit of former ages, conferred some benefits upon ruder men; but the very principle upon which it was founded is no longer a promoter of good: civilisation has gone beyond its assistance, and introduced more solid motives of rectitude. Vain nations will retain this principle as long as they are vain, but proud empires will do well to reject its arbitration as speedily as they can: they possess a more competent judge, and the more they appeal to that alone, the greater will be their progress.

That honor was long unknown may be learned from the history of all the antient, and many of the modern nations. The Greeks were not so susceptible on the score of personal affronts as the French; yet the conquerors of Marathon, the men who fell at Thermopylæ, had not less noble sentiments than the veterans of Louis XIV. The Romans who, when they called upon each other for the performance of a promise, did not invoke the name of honor, but the presence of the gods, and added sanctity to the transaction, had not less courage or constancy than the British. In Asia there is no proof that honor subsisted; and, among Mahometans, Allah is the bond. Even savages contract engagements in the names of their divinities, and the wrath of heaven is the threatened punishment for infraction. But in Europe, unless a contract be signed, or an oath be taken, promises are binding only in honor, which, in proportion as the law of the land is disregarded, and religion is evaded, extends its judicature and its tyranny.

But the manners of modern nations are more refined since honor has been current, and the whole system of social intercourse is on a milder and a surer footing. The fact is certain, but the improvement has better sources than the caprices of honor. If we are milder and more affable than our forefathers, it is not because we are more

able, but because the kindness which we have been taught to exercise upon great occasions, extends to trifles, and contributes to the minor enjoyments of those with whom we live, no less than to their more essential happiness. Surely, if religion is not powerful enough to inspire benevolence, honor cannot be more persuasive; neither can any social advantage be more strongly secured than by the Christian precept, ‘Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.’

The force of honor in the empires of modern Europe is almost inversely as their progress in the best modifications of social improvement; Greece, indeed, and Italy may be exceptions. Spain has been made susceptible and touchy, feelingly alive to the point of honor by the irritating presence of invaders. Though quick to take offence, to revenge an insult, the Spaniards have avoided many vices which are its usual companions. The grandeur and energy of their character have raised the weaker to the rank of the stronger power; an extraordinary result in such strenuous partisans of imaginative religion.

Russia unites the point of honor with great national depravity; but the sooner she returns to the impulses of natural circumstances, the sooner she will run the career to which she was destined. A short-lived military reputation, too great to be maintained by so small a nation, but not greater than individual bravery can support, has made the Swedes susceptible to a certain point of honor; but neither they nor the Danes are inclined to introduce that divinity entirely as a substitute for virtue.

The prevalence of honor in England is more temperate than in any European country. Still, however, it has too much influence over the national mind; its abuse in duelling is too general; and its tyrannical injustice with regard to debts of play is not sufficiently reprobated. A general rectitude in the minds of Englishmen, a better feeling of the value of human life, raises them above the demands of frivolity and the clamors of fashion on every subject where conscience can be the guide. In Scotland honor is less  
 tic than in England.



The country in which honor long exercised the most extensive dominion was antient France, for the whole morality of the nation was comprised in that single word. M. de Montesquieu has left so admirable a picture of the peculiarities of French honor, though he was often obliged to soften it down to the taste of very severe censors, whom open truth would have offended, that a juster notion of it cannot be given than by collecting his materials.

The early education of the French was not adapted to the development of this sentiment, and the true school of honor was the world. There the nobles were taught that virtue required to be adorned by a peculiar grace, which nothing but high birth could bestow; and that politeness was the basis of the social system. Their actions were not to be measured by justice, virtue, or reason, but valued as great, brilliant, or extraordinary; and if, in the worst deeds, honor could discern any thing elevated or dazzling, it employed its abundant sophistry to render them legitimate. Thus it was that the ardor of passion, the hope of subduing female obduracy, of being found more pleasing than a rival, nay, that constancy itself were the subtleties by which an illicit attachment between the sexes was made respectable; that duplicity, cunning, prevarication, and all the petty artifices allied to absolute falsehood were admissible, under the appellation of address, when employed for the advantage of the sovereign, the glory of his arms, the success of his policy, or the promotion of his intrigues; and that adulation and flattery, administered with delicacy and accepted with courtesy, conferred dignity upon the giver and the receiver. Honor, too, was the arbiter even of the monarch's opinion; for, if he commanded an action which would have made a nobleman unworthy to serve him, that same honor made it a duty to refuse. Honor, then, that prejudice which religion always sought to temper or destroy—which presided over the most trifling forms of politeness, yet was stronger than the sovereign himself, had its laws; and the most imperious was, that whatever it forbade or enjoined was more strenuously prohibited or commanded than it could be by any other power upon earth.

Such was the system of French ethics when the immortal author of the ' *Esprit des Loix*' wrote, and long before his time. The ceaseless study of that nation was not to correct, but to embellish immorality, and to give it a grace and ease which might make it agreeable to the well bred and polite. The concealment of refined depravity was not required, for the enfeebled state of public virtue did not exact the homage of hypocrisy. The utmost it demanded was mystery, not secrecy ; and offences were admired, provided they were stripped of grossness and vulgarity, of bluntness and audacity ; of every thing except the real ill attached to them. To the nobility and courtiers this polished state of depravity peculiarly belonged, and it was their boast that they had conferred on every vice its highest refinement.

Since the death of Montesquieu, a political revolution has taken place, which has had considerable influence upon the morals of his country. The monarchical subtleties which made immorality appear graceful, have been effaced ; honor has been perverted, but its evils remain uncorrected. The mask has been violently torn from off the antient idol, and all that is left is the disgusting image of bare and naked depravity, where not a trace can be found to tell posterity that so much vice had ever been adorned by so much delicacy.

Although Montesquieu condemned the honor of his countrymen—though he felt its frivolous advantages, as well as its real inconveniences, yet he esteemed his nation happy in having found this substitute for virtue. He even says, that, as the most beautiful machines employ the fewest springs and wheels, so does monarchy, with the smallest expenditure of virtue, produce the grandest results. This assertion is not a little tinctured with the sophistry which he himself attributes to honor. But his errors belong to his age and country, for his genius was superior to both.

A melancholy symptom of depravity is, when the most sacred duties are recommended in the name of honor. There is a crime to which it is said that the proudest nations are the most addicted, though in their moral code it is forbidden

by the laws of virtue, and which, though in vain nations the chief prohibition is made by honor, is alleged to be less common among them. That crime is suicide: by vanity suicide is held to be dishonorable; by pride it is called criminal. The former alleges it to be a mark of cowardice, a dereliction of duty, a desertion in the hour of danger. The latter, overlooking the very small portion of cowardice by which it is stigmatised, considers it as contrary to divine intention.

Suicide, however, may belong to either of these characteristics, and it is to be found as well among the Hindoos as among the Romans. Among the former it is a result of fanaticism; among the latter it was deliberate and cool, a consequence of strong feeling, and the mark of a superior mind. No example could more justly show the fallacy of reputation, as a judge of national morality, than the present, for the grandeur and elevation of the persons who, in Rome, committed this dreadful act, and of the sentiments which impelled them to it, have held that nation up to fame, while the Hindoos and others, whose daily practice—nay, whose duty—it is, are hardly reproved as nations of suicides. The mere abstract deed of self-destruction is undoubtedly marked by a character of pride. The daringness of suddenly rushing into the presence of the Almighty by an act of our own will, suits the disordered grandeur of this sentiment, and of all the vices which its abuse can engender. Although the timid hand of vanity may not be stayed by any interposition of duty, yet it would shrink from pain were no glory to be reaped from it. Neither are the calamities under which proud men find life a burden so severely felt by the vain, as to admit no remedy but death. Instead of restraining suicide exclusively to either modification of self-approbation, it is juster to say that, when deliberate, it appertains to pride; when enthusiastic, to vanity. But vanity alone could call it dishonorable, or brand with cowardice an act of so much impiety.

In the patriarchal ages, suicide was not committed, and we must turn to other times to find examples of a crime which the early inhabitants of the globe had not yet learned.

It seems as if the human race, but newly issuing from the hands of the Creator, feared to rush back uncalled into his presence, and received longevity as a boon, from which no earthly sufferings should make them recoil. Sesostris, king of Egypt, was one of the earliest persons recorded as a self-destroyer, to the great admiration of the priests of his nation.

As the Jews had a law which suspended till sun-set the burial of all who had killed themselves, it may be concluded that the crime was not unknown to them. Saul and Ahithophel were self-murderers. It is in holy writ that the noblest examples of self-immolation occur, of men who devoted themselves to death for the welfare of their country, as in the instances of Samson and the Maccabees.

Among the Greeks such examples were frequent, for the companions of Leonidas deserve the highest rank among noble martyrs to true patriotism. Codrus, the last of the Athenian kings, is another glorious instance of self-devotion. But, upon the whole, it does not appear that suicide was a common practice of the nations of Greece. In their mythology the action was not prohibited by any religious feeling, neither was it held criminal. But the Greeks, though quick and sensitive, did not give themselves up to deep impressions, and to lasting sentiments.

That acts of suicide were common among the general population of Rome, is not so certain as that self-immolation was prescribed to every noble soul, in every instance where the country could be benefited by it. Examples of heroic devotedness occur in every page of Roman history. Curtius, three Decii, the family of the Fabii, had many imitators in the virtuous days of the republic, and Regulus, the noblest of all, has had no equal in that or any country. As soon as the Commonwealth had lost many of the virtues which made it dear to its children, the frequency of self-devotion diminished, but another motive for suicide arose during the decline of the republic.

The distance which separates the two causes of self-destruction is immense ; and, though both may imply much virtue in the persons who destroyed themselves, yet the

condition of public morals in the two cases must be considered as opposite extremes. The degradation of Roman virtue under the rule of Cæsar preyed on the noble mind of Cato, and drove him to an act which he himself would have condemned upon any other motive. The destruction of the Commonwealth, which Brutus, Cassius, and others had attempted to raise anew out of its ashes, drove those magnanimous souls to despair, and they could not calmly contemplate the ruin which Philippi had made of the glory of their ancestors. They towered above their contemporaries in republican energy, not because they were more virtuous than their predecessors, but because virtue was extinct among their countrymen. They, indeed, were fit to live in the best days of Rome, but the Romans were no longer worthy to live with them. Yet even the suicides committed by these men cannot be considered as quite exempt from blame, for it brought no advantage to the nation, but was caused by an incapability to endure the evils of the world. Though affliction for public ills is more noble than sorrow for one's own misfortunes, and though heathen philosophy may call the despair which they bring on great minds patriotism, yet severer practices are now prescribed, and the man who sinks beneath the weight of private griefs, and the hero who sacrifices himself on the tomb of his country, are equally condemned. The sentiment which won respect for suicide among the ancients was pride, and, according to the religion then known, that pride was not in contradiction with conscience. The motives which impelled them were general and dignified, detached from personal interests or weakness, and, as cowardice had no share in them, they were honored as the proofs of a high, a brave, and an independent spirit.

Where religion is imaginative and morality conventional, where barbarous superstitions usurp the place of devotion, self-immolation is ordained as a religious duty. The acts committed by many nations of Asia, and by the women of Malabar, in which the will of the individual has no part, are characteristic of vanity more than of pride, and belong to nations bending under the double weight of superstition and despotism.

But the promulgation of Christianity altered every idea which had hitherto been harboured respecting suicide. It then became evident that a man had as little right to murder himself, as to murder any other human being, and that if the one was prohibited, the other was as surely in opposition to the will of Providence. It may be said that Christianity itself prescribed a species of self-immolation, the duty of martyrdom. But this is not correct. The persecuted Christians did not lay violent hands upon themselves ; they were sacrificed by order of their heathen enemies ; and though they might have saved themselves by apostacy, the guilt of their death lay entirely upon their murderers. No vanity was mingled with their sufferings, and they were supported throughout by the pride of an approving conscience.

It may not be easy to ascertain the modern nations in which the greatest proportion of suicides is committed. Registers of such acts are not generally more exact than lists of crimes and punishments. The circumstances which accompany them, however, in the different countries, may throw some light upon the state of public morals in each.

In the south of Europe suicide rarely happens from any strenuous feelings. The agitations of the soul are neither deep nor lasting enough to urge men to such desperate acts.

The feelings of the Germans are more powerful, and the tempests of their northern souls are more impetuous. But, not content with the degree of sensibility which natural circumstances have given them, they stimulate their minds to a species of factitious exaltation which disfigures all their genuine energies. Cut off from extensive intercourse by its inland position, Germany exists among the nations of Europe like a pedant among men of the world, and all her deportment is scholastic. The riotless ambition of intellect, which conscious power bestows, has no adequate vent, but, like a giant in a dungeon, wastes its efforts in vain attempts to be free. From this concentration of mental force—from this want of its proper application—from its abstraction, arises a disastrous malady—the disorder and the misapplication of one of the noblest functions of intellect, imagination. According to the German import, imagination has

no bounds, for it consists in saying or doing what never before was said or done. The more monstrous it is, the more it is admired ; and no small portion of its merit consists in forming the most heterogeneous combinations of thought. This love of singularity is the cause of many of the extravagances to which that nation is attached.

That this principle should be perceptible in such an act as suicide, may appear incredible, but the assertion is correct. Madame de Staël relates the following anecdote :— Monsieur de K. and Madame de V., two respectable inhabitants of Berlin, went to an inn at Potsdam in 1811, where, after taking some refreshment and singing hymns, the gentleman, as agreed upon by both parties, shot the lady, and afterwards himself. Madame de V. had sent her daughter to the play the day before the suicide. She had dressed herself in her most splendid apparel for the occasion ; she had written a letter, in which, sure of eternal happiness, she said that, from the height of heaven, she—a murderess—would continue to watch over her daughter's welfare, and the preparations for the dreadful act were terminated by the ceremonies of religion.

Another anecdote, almost incredible, may help to place the German tendency to morbid sentimentalism in its true light. A young man of distinction had been crossed in his amours with a person of inferior birth, and their misfortunes had made them celebrated. At length his parents, worn out by intreaties, consented to their union. The lovers, however, reflecting that their celebrity would cease with their misfortunes, agreed to meet in a beautiful romantic spot, near one of the great roads, and on the banks of one of the principal rivers of Germany, and there, after collecting flowers to deck their tombs, and erecting a little monument to their own memories, the lover shot his mistress and himself.

Although particular cases must be received with caution, in general investigations, yet the frequency of acts like these, and accompanied by such circumstances, being greater in Germany than elsewhere, does stamp upon the character of that nation a distinguishing feature which belongs to none



other. So much absurdity in an act of despair—so much extravagance in impiety—such deliberate folly, are not to be met with in other countries.

The reputation of being addicted to suicide is attached to the English more than to any other modern nation. This opinion is adopted by the eloquent authoress just quoted, and upon it she founds remarks as to the causes which make that crime so common there. The author of the '*Esprit des Loix*' carries the idea still further, and, attributing the act to an imperfect filtration of the nervous juices, says that it would be as unjust to punish suicide as to punish madness in that country. Both Madame de Staël and her greater predecessor upon this subject have fallen into the common error of supposing that suicide really is more frequent in England than elsewhere. The fact, however, is the reverse, and if these eminent writers had examined the documents of their own country, they would have found it to be so, particularly as those documents must, for the reason already adduced, be considered as below the truth.

The motives which induce to suicide in England are justly appreciated by Madame de Staël; active and impetuous minds—a spirit of enterprise—a strong importance attached to public esteem, the loss of which makes life insupportable, are among the principal causes which this lady brings forward. The check to these impulses, the counterpoise of all, is religion, the full conviction that no human misery can excuse self-destruction in the eye of the Almighty.

The same eloquent writer admits that some examples of suicide are to be found in France, but, generally speaking, it is not a melancholy turn of mind, or the exaltation of feeling which is the cause. Absolute sufferings and misfortunes have driven a few Frenchmen to the act, and they have committed it with intrepidity, but, at the same time, with levity and indifference. The French possess few of the motives which impel the English to suicide. Their feelings are weak and fleeting; the loss of public opinion is less painful: but the value of life is not so great to a Frenchman, because it is composed of pleasure rather than of happiness. The only check which he knows to self-



destruction is honor, the dread of being reputed that which of all things is the most insupportable to a nation wild with military glory—a coward.

It is here asserted, upon the authority of a respectable man, who, during forty years, was attached to one of the most remarkable institutions of antient France, the police of Paris, that, previously to the revolution, the number of suicides committed in that capital amounted to fifteen per month, but that since that period it had progressively increased till it reached one per day, or double the former quantity.

From a French document for the years 1815 and 1816, it appears that, in the former, the number of suicides committed in Paris was one hundred and seventy-five; in the latter, one hundred and eighty-eight. In another part of the same document it is stated that, in 1816, the bodies of two hundred and seventy-eight persons were exposed at the Morgue, the mode of whose death was unknown; but as these persons must have died by accidental death, by assassination, or by suicide, and, as it will afterwards appear, positive want of subsistence being a frequent cause of voluntary death in Paris, and these bodies being generally those of the lower orders, it is not too much to assume that one-third of this number had perished by suicide. The sum total, therefore, is two hundred and eighty, in a population largely estimated at seven hundred thousand.

From an official document of the suicides committed in London during the same year, and which must be considered as much nearer to the truth than the French report, the number was seventy-two, in a population which, upon the lowest computation, amounts to one million. Hence the proportion of suicides, in equal populations of England and France, is as one to five and a fraction. It is true the year 1816 was one of foreign invasion, but many other epochs confirm one to five as the lowest ratio of suicides in both countries. The French assert that the British lists of suicides contain only those whom a coroner's verdict has returned as such, and that the coroner's inquest always mitigates the sentence; but this assertion is unfounded, for

the legal report is made according to fact, independent of causes.

Thus, although the incitements to suicide are greater in England than in France, the proportion deduced from the capital of either country is, at least, as five to one in favor of that nation in which religion, not honor, operates as the check. But the publicity of all the concerns of this country—the effect produced upon the public mind by so desperate an act as self-destruction—the importance attached to every thing which relates to national morals, hold up the rarer instances of British suicide to more general notice, than the indifference of the French, and their silence upon all that can diminish public admiration.

The motives of suicide in France are far from being so dignified as in England; and if, in so criminal an act, the less important consideration of the cause and the manner can have any weight, the balance would lean very much in favor of the prouder people. Suicide in Britain is never committed with levity. The cause, too, is moral more than physical necessity; while the proportion of the latter, as stated, in an official French document, to be among the motives of suicide, is truly afflicting.

That want of food, the hopelessness of procuring subsistence, should be so prevailing a cause of suicide in so luxuriant a country as France, must give rise to many sad reflections, were it not that they may all be summed up in this truth, which seems to pervade the globe, and to be the universal rule of human exertion:—Wherever nature has done the most for man, man does the least for himself.

If there be any class of virtues more particularly dependant upon pride than upon vanity, it is that to which benevolence belongs. No bond so strengthens the natural propensities of men to unite together, and gives one common interest to all the members of the same community, as common and superable difficulties: in none, too, have the moderns so great a superiority over the antients.

It must not, however, be supposed that the virtues, humanity were unknown to the antients. The contrary is sufficiently proved by their uninterrupted practice of ho

pitality ; the principal form under which the more enlightened quality of general charity showed itself in the infant state of society. The examples which occur in sacred and profane historians are innumerable ; and it was celebrated by the poets of all nations from the earliest times. The demands of a stranger who knocked at a door to ask for food and shelter were held in veneration, and the memory of all who refused his petition or violated his rights was, like the ‘*illaudatus Busiris*,’ held up to execration. Homer, too, says that strangers and beggars were sent from Jove, as it were to afford good men an opportunity for indulging in this virtue.

From the hospitality of the antients, which was wild and indiscriminate, a virtue of barbarism, arose, by the help of increasing civilisation, the more general and enlightened virtue of charity ; which teaches that every man who is in want, like the stranger and the beggar sent by Jove, is entitled to the kindness of all who can relieve him. This is the hospitality of proud, civilised, pious, and moral nations. It is prescribed to all, indeed, though it is practised by each in the same proportion as most other virtues.

A quality analogous to charity, but which rather belongs to vanity, is generosity ; for, being optional, and not proportioned to any measure of justice, it attracts more applause than conscientious approbation. Generous actions may, indeed, belong to pride also, but they are done in secret. Generous feelings are a property of pride alone, and are always accompanied by the magnanimous calmness and dignity of that noble sentiment.

It is difficult to ascertain how great was the charity of the antients ; but, had it been very remarkable, more records of it would have remained ; and it is fair to conclude, as well from history as from theory, that this virtue is greater now than formerly. Athens, and other states of Greece, made provision for the children of soldiers slain in war. But neither there nor in Rome did those humane establishments abound which so proudly raise their heads amid the palaces of modern princes. The neighbourhood of the temple of Minerva was not blessed with any receptacle for indigent

and suffering Athenians ; neither could Jupiter Capitolinus behold, near his thousand pillars, any building destined to shelter the miseries of the Roman people. But since that time hospitals have arisen in every Christian city ; and the least charitable European capital has yet to boast of more benevolent establishments than all that could be collected throughout the pagan world in every age.

The nation, however, which deserves the first place, as having exercised this virtue more largely than any which ever has existed, is the proudest of the world. The innumerable instances which occur in the political, no less than in the domestic history of England ; the charitable establishments which, in all times, have risen up in every part of this kingdom ; the number of strangers who, at different epochs, have found not only a place of safety in the British territory, but every charitable succour from its inhabitants ; the enemies to whom Britons have sent relief, and the humanity which they have often shown to those who had sought to injure them : it is sufficient to compare all these facts with what has occurred, in like periods, among other nations, to be fully convinced that, in the fulfilment of this duty, the proudest nations have been the most conscientious.

Without entering into the multiplied examples which it would be easy to adduce in proof of this assertion, one general and leading fact will carry sufficient conviction. The English are the only nation upon record who have done an absolute injury to their moral and to their political existence by too benevolent an indulgence in the virtue of charity. The consequences of the laws enacted for the relief of the poor are the evidences of this truth.

It may be said that a provision for the poor, enacted by law, is compulsory, and leaves no merit to the individuals who bestow it ; but the merit of the nation is the same. It is difficult to conceive an expression of national will more voluntary, more general, and more incontrovertible, than that pronounced by the British legislature, not in two or three successive sessions or parliaments, but by the united councils of the empire during as ma

**The evils which have resulted**

conducted bounty to the poor cannot be placed in too strong a light. The law which declared that he who could not, nay, that he who would not labour, should receive a large portion of the benefit arising from the industry of others, is such that it is hard to say which is most to be wondered at, the benevolence or the improvidence of the people who could enact it. But all who reflect must agree that the evil has resulted from the noblest spirit of humanity which ever brought distress upon an enlightened people; and that the wisest and the best of nations, that which has always taken the largest views of human concerns, has been seduced, but once, into the error of allowing private gratification legally to triumph over public good; and that once was in too much indulging the noblest virtue of the heart.

A still more extraordinary fact relating to British charities, and which proves to what an extent the propensity is national, is, that the relief which the legislature has granted has not diminished the inclination or the ability of individuals to contribute further assistance; and the amount of charitable donations in Britain, independent of the law, is perhaps greater than that which it has enacted.

It has been urged by those who would detract from the merit of British charity that it is founded upon ostentation, upon a desire to show a superiority, whether national or individual; and the assertion has been supported upon the habitual publication of the charitable donations which take place throughout the kingdom.

Happy is the nation whose foibles lead to virtue, whose ostentation disposes it to be charitable, and which finds superiority in relieving the wants of its members, and making its poor less wretched. That surely is a nobler sentiment which covers the country with comfortable hospitals; which draws from the nation so many and such extensive sacrifices for the support of suffering humanity, than that which sets a higher value on splendid palaces and sumptuous tables.

The publication of the charities of England is, in fact, connected with a much wider system than ostentation. To lay before the public the entire transactions of the country,

whether good or bad ; to represent the inhabitants exactly as they are, that they may know themselves ; to probe into the truth, whether sound or unsound, are the effects and the duty of an uncontrolled liberty of expressing thoughts and opinions ; and the same page which contains a register of British virtue, contains also a catalogue of British crimes. Now, if the one be the phrase of ostentation, the other must be the expression of humility. The press of England does what no other European press does ; it represents the country exactly as it is. By those who study only the good which it divulges, the nation is accused of ostentation. By those who look for nothing but the bad, it is rated as the most immoral. But neither estimation is correct ; and the publicity, which is the vivifying principle of the whole system, does not result from a wish to captivate opinion. It is the undisguised tale of the evil, the unadorned catalogue of the good which England contains ; and may be compared to the window which a philosopher of antiquity desired to see in the bosom of every man, which, while it should show the human heart exactly as it is, would spare it the trouble and the vice of dissimulation.

If English benevolence were really the result of pride or of ostentation, the proportion of charitable donors who would enrol their names at full length upon the public lists ought to be very great. It would be interesting, then, to inquire what support the accusation would receive from this criterion :—

The superiority of him who bestows charity communicates so delicate a nature to benevolence, that, if not exercised with tenderness, the injury it may do to the feelings of him who receives it may be greater than the benefit conferred. The surest way to avoid humiliation is for the hand which reaches out assistance to remain unknown. In acts of direct benevolence to an individual, the person on whom alms are bestowed is eminently disposed to feel his inferiority ; and there is a peculiar delicacy in the benefactor who continues anonymous.

When generosity is applied to works of national utility no insulting superiority can be shown. He who gives is

not placed in contact with an individual poorer and weaker than himself, and whom misery has humbled, but with his superiors, the public, which, taken collectively, is more important than the members who compose it. Contributors to public objects may then, without arrogance, affix their names to donations; nay, it is even desirable that they should do so, as their example may stimulate the slothful.

But between these two cases there are many intermediate terms, which partake in endless variety of the nature of either, as they belong to public utility or to private charity. An hospital, for instance, the inmates of which are unknown to the benefactors, and not even specified at the moment of contributing, may be considered as appertaining to both, for charity is there offered through the hands of the public, whose intervention would make all manifestation of superiority ridiculous. In this case, then, it is nearly indifferent whether benefactors remain anonymous or not, for the advantages of silence or publicity are nearly balanced.

An examination of the lists of British charities, published in the daily prints, prove how groundless is the reproach of ostentation which foreigners make. The first which chance threw in the way of investigation was a subscription to a public charity, and the proportion of anonymous donations was one-seventh; another list contained one-fifth of anonymous donations; another, one-third; another, two-fifths; and it was remarkable that the unknown contributors were not those who gave the smallest sums, but that the ratio was nearly the same in the gifts as in the givers. In some lists relating to public works, the proportion of anonymous contributors is diminished, and in the instance of a national monument to be erected by female subscription to a British hero, it was absolutely nothing. But the strongest evidence against the charge of ostentation was a case which occurred on the 28th Nov., 1814. A person who had seen better days had purloined some provisions, to give one meal more to a starving wife and five dying children. His actual distress and his former probity being ascertained in his examination before a magistrate, charitable contributions poured in so fast upon him unsolicited, that, in three days, he returned

his thanks in the same daily paper which had announced his misery, and requested the public no longer to overwhelm him with their benevolence, as he was, by their assistance, not only raised above want himself, but enabled to establish three of his children in the world. However astonishing the extent of British charity may be, the coincidence between the theory and the practice of anonymous donations is still more amazing—a coincidence which, maintained by the national feeling, and expressed, without concert, in action, is the just compliment of this great virtue, and can occur only in a community where the noblest affections are guided by the most enlightened reason.

It has also been said that the British, being the most opulent of nations, have no merit in being the most charitable. But the benevolence of England is in a much higher proportion than her riches. As far as the observations and inquiries of a single person can be considered as an authority, it is here stated that the anonymous charities alone of that country are equal to the sum total of the charities of all the rest of Europe. An average taken during several years, and from ample documents, gives between one-fourth and one-third, as the average proportion of anonymous contributions to charities, public and private, not including public works. Now, other observations leave no doubt that England bestows in charity more than three times as much as all the other nations of Europe taken collectively.

The British are further accused of being guided by selfish policy in their charities to foreigners. It is true that domestic misery alone does not excite the active generosity of England, and more instances could be given of assistance bestowed by her upon the natives of other nations, than by all the empires of the world. The unfortunate of every country are alike the objects of her bounty; and it has often fallen to her lot, in the midst of war and desolation, to pour into the wounds of her enemies a balm and a consolation which others have not been fortunate enough to bestow upon their friends. But amid all this bounty it would be impossible to substantiate any charge of selfishness, and the charity of Britain is as pure as it is liberal. . . .



Among modern nations the Dutch may rank immediately after the British for the exercise of benevolence. During the whole period of liberty and independence in that country, hospitals and establishments of all kinds, conducted on the most just and liberal footing, and supported by the voluntary contributions of private persons, abounded.

The difficulties against which that nation had to contend incessantly taught the value of man. But those difficulties were of too absorbing a nature to give entire expansion to Dutch beneficence, and it was principally confined to objects found at home. But, if strangers partook but little in it, the condition of Holland was not rendered worse by the very means devised to give relief. Be it superior prudence on this head, or less ardent feelings, or any other cause, the Dutch were not guilty of the same excesses of benevolence as the British have been in the administration of their poor-rates.

Next to Holland in benevolence must be ranked the northern provinces of Germany; particularly those which are attached to the most devout of the Christian communions. The south of Europe feels less the necessity of general charity; and, though hospitals abound, the sentiment of humanity is not so strong. The Spaniards, although they have suffered more from man than from nature, are more charitable than the Italians.

The public charities maintained in France are more numerous than in Spain or Italy; yet they are far from bearing the same proportion to the wealth and population of that country as British charities do to English wealth and population. A still smaller proportion, as appears from such documents as are attainable, is the amount of anonymous donations. The benevolence of vanity is seldom secret. France, too, has been sung by her poets as the asylum of unfortunate kings. To afford a shelter to the few who have fallen from the pinnacle of mortal greatness is humane, and more splendid than to give refuge to the numerous obscure; but to succour the crowds of the common poor is still more charitable. Now history can show that the number of princes who have been relieved

unsung in Britain, though monarchical superstition is less there than in France, is at least as great; while the assistance given to subjects has been, beyond comparison, more extensive.

The virtue which speaks the most loudly in favor of national character is charity, benevolence, and good-will to mankind exhibited in action. With this the existence of every other virtue is certain, for it is impossible to bear the love of our fellow-creatures in our hearts, and not to be imbued with every feeling which contributes to their happiness.

The quality the most in opposition with charity is cruelty. It is also the most disastrous feature by which a nation can be characterised. Were the annihilation of society to be accomplished by any single vice, cruelty is the engine which the demon would employ to effect that end. It is a bitter reflection that not a nation exists which has not, at some period or other, been afflicted by this scourge. One cause of its generality is that the prejudices of barbarity have, at least in one very important instance, derived the practice equally from the difficulties, as from the ease with which subsistence and prosperity may be secured. The case alluded to is common to every nation of the globe in its ruder days; for the practice of human sacrifices has predominated under the most opposite conditions of natural situation. The motives which may induce men in the state of ignorance to offer up their fellow men to the objects of their worship, may as well be the little value attached to their existence as the extreme worth in which they are held. The one may impel them to consider their destruction as no crime; the other to regard them as the noblest offerings which can be made to the gods. In one case human holocausts may be sacrificed without more feeling or compunction than if the victims were mere brutes. In the other, they are led to the altar with all the solemnity of piety, and their blood is shed with the full conviction of the merit of the act. For these reasons it was almost impossible that any nation should escape the practice. Thus the Egyptians, on a certain day, threw a virgin into the Nile, and sacrificed the red-haired at the tomb of Osiris. The Ethiopians

offered boys to the sun and virgins to the moon. The Syrians tied their children up in sacks and hurled them down a consecrated precipice. The Phœnicians gave the horrible preference to their nearest friends. The Babylonians, not content with the practice of human sacrifices among themselves, taught it to the neighbouring nations. It was common in all the land of Canaan when the people of Israel arrived there; and the Ammonites threw their children into the fire in honor of Moloch. Even the Israelites, perverting the intention of the Almighty, when he demanded the death of Isaac as a test of Abraham's submission, sacrificed infants in the moments of their impiety. The Greeks offered up human victims to render the gods propitious. The Chinese thought the murder of their children would avert misfortune. The code of Bramah, too, ordained similar sacrifices; and they were practised among the Indians in the earliest times. The nations that, like the Thracians and the inhabitants of Malabar, made it a religious principle to burn the widows and the slaves of the deceased, are among the number of human sacrificers. No people persevered longer in the practice than the Carthaginians. The Romans had frequent recourse to it; and the self-devotion of many was connected with the belief that human life thus lost was pleasing to the gods. The Cappadocians, among whom the custom was introduced by Orestes and Iphigenia, ceased to sacrifice human beings only at the instigation of the Romans. The Scythians offered up to Mars one tenth part of the prisoners taken in war; and to the sun they sacrificed horses as the animal next in value to man in the opinion of a warlike people. In the middle and the north of Europe, among the Gauls, the Germans, and the Britons—among the Scandinavians, the Cimbri—wherever the religion of the Druids and of Odin prevailed—among the ancestors of those who are now the most civilised and humane, the custom raged to a dreadful extent; and, in certain portions of this enlightened quarter of the globe, it lasted until the ninth, nay, according to some, so late as the twelfth century. In America it was found to exist among the Mexicans, and hundreds of children have

in one moment been sacrificed to the health of the Peruvian Incas. At this hour it is practised by the Arreoy Societies in Otaheite, and in the islands of the South Seas; and many African and American nations still murder and devour their prisoners. Some tribes of the Mahrattas fatten human victims for the altar; and the efficacy of such sacrifices over every other mode of pious conciliation is still a prevailing principle throughout a considerable portion of the globe.

Amid such indiscriminate prevalence of the custom, it would be difficult to discern anything like a general law of national character, except, indeed, that cruelty is the vice of the ignorant, and should, among uncivilised men, be considered as an error of the understanding rather than a fault of the heart. Nations, unrestrained by just notions of the divinity, may easily be led to conceive that the crime of idly shedding human blood is a virtue when sanctioned by the pomp of ceremony.

In the same class as human sacrifices may be ranked other customs usual among barbarous nations whose overstocked population or precarious supplies make the useless members of the community a burden. The Scythians, for instance, killed and devoured their aged parents, deeming such an end more honorable than a natural death. Among other nations infanticide was practised—the Greeks permitted it, and Plato and Aristotle were its advocates. In Athens, Solon prescribed it by law, and in Sparta it was both legal and customary. The founder of Rome forbade the exposure of children before they had attained their third year; and in this, as in most other humane practices, the Romans showed their superiority. In China it is usual at this hour. In a district of Benares, mothers are compelled to starve their female children to death. In New Holland infanticide is performed with peculiar cruelty; and this, indeed, is the most common check which savage societies have devised to remove the evils of redundant population.

In every state of society one general mode of ~~estimation~~ the value of human creatures prevails—they most appreciated where their utility is ~~great~~

countries their real worth is never known ; for, when they cease to be led as victims to the altar, they are persecuted by other means, and never reach the station in which their nature, if developed, would have placed them. But in poorer regions, when civilisation proclaims the true interests of the world, the motives of destruction cease, and human life is valued as it should be. Man becomes dear to man, and the highest mortal object of veneration is the arm which can till a barren waste—the intellect which can make two ears of corn grow where only one was seen before. The happy mediocrity of natural advantages which gives vigor to the mind, and stimulates reflection, finally instils benevolence into the heart, while the vice of cruelty is permanent only where pride does not exist.

The history of Asia and Europe affords many proofs of this doctrine. In the beginning both were barbarous, and both were cruel ; but Asia has continued to find pretexts, nay, has imagined new ones, for shedding human blood, while Europe has learned that inhumanity is a vice. Human sacrifices have, indeed, ceased to be a part of Mahometan as of Christian rites ; but the followers of Christ are merciful, while Mussulmen convert by slaughter. The Druids of Mona were as sanguinary as the priests of Moloch ; but the descendants of the British sacrificers are now benevolent, while the children of the Ammonites, the men who inhabit the valley of the sons of Hinnom, are as vain and as cruel as their ancestors. Asiatic cruelty is marked by levity and indifference. It results from the little value set on human creatures, and is accompanied by no animosity. Excepting in some northern and mountainous parts, it is not attended with the sternness of soul which can endure greatly ; and the Tartaric nations that exhibit fortitude are exceptions. European cruelty is more deliberate—it selects the objects upon which it wreaks itself, and its choice is founded upon hatred.

The large empires of the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Medes and the Persians, having despotism for their basis, were intrinsically inhuman. Neither, in subsequent ages, did the principle of government alter ; and the cruelties

told of Laborosoarched, Astyages, Cambyses, Darius, Xerxes, Ochus, Nebuchadnezzar, and of almost all the antient monarchs of those countries, were not more excessive than those laid to the charge of Mahomet, Khaled, Ebn-Artah, Moslem, Abûl-Abbas-Al-Saffah, Mostassem Kaher-Billah among the Arabs, who are not the most cruel of the Asiatics; of Timour, of Musa, of Selim, of Jallaloddin and those of Jenghiz Khan far surpassed the worst of the antients. The modern monarchs of Persia have left at an immeasurable distance all those named above. In 1505 Shah Ismael ordered 40,000 persons to be put to death in cold blood. Ismael II. surpassed his predecessor in mean barbarity. Abbas I., surnamed the Great, committed innumerable cruelties. Among the number, he put out the eyes of two of his own sons, and ordered a third to be slain. The punishments he employed were more barbarous than the antient *trough*. One person was sewed up in a wet bull's hide; and, as the skin was contracted by drying, he was squeezed to death. A baker was roasted to death in his own oven, and a butcher was hanged by the back upon his own hooks. Sofi I., with but a small portion of his talents, was still more barbarous; and his courtiers applauded the massacre of their own children. Sofi II., who reigned in 1642, was even more cruel, and Soliman did not in anything degenerate from the inhuman spirit of his forefathers. In the history of the world it would be impossible to find a succession of princes who could vie with those who sat upon the throne of Persia during the last centuries; or a nation who could tolerate and applaud their inhuman acts with such devotedness. The propensity, both of the monarch and of the subjects, increased with time.

Although the Hindoos are represented as one of the mildest people of Asia, yet the empire of the Mogul affords instances of inhumanity which do not fall below any that have been quoted. It is sufficient to name Jehan-Ghir, Auringzeb, the massacre at Delhi, to leave no doubt upon the subject. Even China, which may be considered as the least luxurious, the most enlightened empire of that continent, has exhibited more numerous instances of cruelty than

are to be met with in European nations since the introduction of Christianity.

The example of Asia, then, fully confirms the doctrine, that inhumanity is not connected with the progress which vain nations make in social improvement. The antient monarchs of the East built palaces which insulted the misery of the poor; but even Babylon contained no monument of cruelty like that which Musa erected in the fifteenth century to feast his courtiers, and which was composed of the bodies of the Christians whom he had slain in Servia; or like the walls which Timour constructed, not of seventy thousand heads only of his enemies, but often of their living bodies, cemented together with bricks and mortar; or the throne of Persian heads, seated on which Mustafa Pasha gave audience to a Georgian prince. The improvement of Asia in humanity has been to refine upon the antient modes of cruelty.

A continent which throws still more light upon this feeling, is the vast and burning peninsula of the thirsting Africans—*sitientes Afros*—deprived, in a great measure, of both the modifications of social improvement, and inferior to Asia in luxury, and still further removed from Europe in civilisation. Great as are the cruelties just recounted, they are there surpassed, and inhumanity is the grand characteristic of men who have spread themselves out between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic, the Ethiopic and the Indian Oceans.

Where natural difficulties are the result of extreme cold, the faculties of men become as cheerless as the waste of snows on which their view is fixed. Hope keeps alive no active feelings, and moral existence dwindles into animal vegetation. The Finns, in their frozen huts, have none of the strong emotions which madden the men who are starving amid burning deserts; and the effect which the various circumstances of soil, climate, and fertility have upon cruelty may be thus estimated:—1st. Near the pole they render it, like all other propensities, inactive. 2d. In more temperate regions, such as the average of Europe, they subdue it into benevolence. 3d. In luxurious climates, as Asia, they



make it contribute to luxury. 4th. In torrid zones, as in Africa, they inflame it to madness and ferocity.

The most civilised nation of Africa, hardly excepting the Egyptians, was the Carthaginians, enlightened by commerce, and enjoying the best government of antiquity. Yet the perseverance of this people in the practice of human sacrifices was greater than that of Europeans in general. In the beginning of their existence they had a law which obliged them to offer up their fairest and their dearest offspring to Saturn. At a very early period, Darius sent an embassy to them, to require that the custom of human sacrifices might be abolished; but though the demand was complied with for a time, the Sicilians who, shortly afterwards, were sent to surprise and murder Hamilcar, found him completing a sacrifice of three hundred children to the same divinity. The victorious Gelo, too, after defeating them granted them peace upon the express condition, that they should no more commit such murders. A similar ceremony, however, was performed when Agathocles, having ravaged the coast of Africa and taken Tunis, threatened Carthage with destruction. Many centuries later, when Tiberius was proconsul in the part of Africa where the city once stood, a decree of death was issued against all priests who should take a part in the ceremony. Thus, after they had ceased to be a nation, and notwithstanding the repeated remonstrances of friends and foes, this barbarous custom prevailed among them during many ages.

Neither was it in these ceremonies only that this people signalised their propensity to cruelty. The death of Regulus—Roman prisoners crushed to atoms beneath their galleys—Hanno, Asdrubal, crucified for venial offences, and other instances, sufficiently brand this nation with the stigma of cruelty. But all that is recorded in ancient history is surpassed by what is known of modern Africa. Cannibalism is a common practice in most African nations. The Giagas, who dwell near the fifth degree of southern latitude, eat their prisoners, and even their own children. Their markets are stocked with human flesh, and they even wretches whom they devote to death, in order



flavour to the flesh. Tim-bam-Dumba, one of their queens, to animate her army, pounded her infant son in a mortar, and, having composed an ointment of its flesh, with the addition of other ingredients, she spread it over her body in the presence of her subjects, many of whom followed her example. She ordered them also to feed on human flesh, excepting that of females, who were reserved for other sacrifices. But this prohibition only gave a relish to the forbidden delicacy, and the chiefs were regaled with women, daily slaughtered for their private tables. A circumstance which shows to what a degree such propensities were inherent in the people themselves, and not the work of the rulers only, is, that Caluximbo, who, shortly after the reign of this female monster, was at the head of the nation, was murdered by his subjects, because he wished to abrogate them.

But the tendency to ferocity varies in different districts of Africa, and the laws which it seems to follow throw the greatest light upon its nature and causes, and are alone sufficient to establish the present theory in the most satisfactory manner.

Although the climates of Asia and Africa have much resemblance in general, yet the soils are essentially different. Wherever the former continent ceases to be productive in an extreme degree, it does not altogether sink into barrenness, but still yields some food for its inhabitants; but the sands of Africa are often wholly unproductive—want is extreme there, and insuperable arid heat maddens the wretches who starve beneath it. Thus, in the former continent, inhumanity is less where abundance is less, while in the latter it is excessive where the difficulty of subsistence is the greatest. These facts are related in the Universal History. What credit they deserve, it is hard to say, but they are so consonant with the theory of cruelty, that they merit to be quoted in this place. On the coast of Zanguebar, in the whole of Caffraria, in the desert of Belidulgerid, on the coast of Guinea, among the Manez, cruelty is common; and in the interior, still more sanguinary than these are the Zimbos, the Giagas above mentioned, the Galla, and the natives of the desert Iguidi. Now, the districts which these nations inhabit

are the most sandy, parched, and barren of the entire continent. But where a fertile spot, an oasis appears, the disposition of the natives becomes more gentle. Melinda, Mombaza, immediately to the north of Caffraria, Sofala, Monomotapa, which touch its southern boundary, are productive, and the natives are less inhuman.

On the opposite coast the same law holds good. Congo is fertile, and its natives gentle. Angola, less uniformly fertile, is less uniformly humane. The province of Piri is the richest, and the least cruel of the kingdom of Loango. The kingdom of Congo is still more abundant, and the inhabitants are still more gentle. Benin is equally remarkable for fertility and for benevolence. Whydah is represented as a paradise, where humanity is the most common of the virtues. In the midst of the Ivory coast, a country certainly not remarkable for either quality, are the Quaquas, renowned for both. The natives of Sierra Leone, in general, are, by the gentleness of their manners, worthy of the luxuriant country which they possess; but the Manez, whose province is less fertile, are cruel, and have frequently overrun the Capez, their neighbours, who are reputed to be the mildest of the negroes, and whose beautiful vallies often tempt invaders. Monon, Foulah, equally confirm the assertion, and no part of the world gives stronger evidence upon the nature and causes of cruelty than that in which it is the most excessive.

A nation from whom much information may be derived, and for the same reason, is the Jews. The cruelty of this people was always equalled by the levity which accompanied it, and the want of compunction which followed it. The fall of the city presents a picture of barbarity which could hardly be equalled in the world; and in this vice, the vain and perverse children of Israel stand very prominent. The tranquil delight which a reader experiences in turning from such scenes as these, to the mild and gentle pages of Greek and Roman history, can be known only by those who have perused them in the present intention. Thou  
tutions of Sparta were, at least, severe, ~~and~~  
and contrary to every sentiment of na

cruelty were rare. The Lacedæmonians punished, indeed, with extreme severity the enemies whom they subdued, as the Messenians for instance, and the offences of the Caryatides were harshly expiated. The Athenians, too, were occasionally cruel, as their treatment of many of their best and greatest men evinces; yet, upon the whole, though levity, fickleness, and ingratitude were their frequent characteristics, the acts in which these qualities manifested themselves cannot be compared with any which have been related. The Romans, while they were republicans, and worthy to be so, were still more humane than the Greeks: for, though the desire of leaving a memorable example made them generally rigid in their punishments, foreign and domestic, yet during many centuries hardly a single example of wanton cruelty could be found in Roman history, and indiscriminate massacres, proscriptions, vindictive murders on a large scale, among the people, began to be in vogue only when every virtue was declining. Then, indeed, the lessons taught by Marius and Sylla produced their effects, and the hundred thousand citizens butchered by the latter were followed by many more. Much time, however, elapsed before the people became entirely cruel, and the worst of the Cæsars had sent innumerable victims to the grave, before their subjects took the weapons of inhumanity into their own hands. But if, in the period of liberty, examples of popular ferocity were rare, in the season of depravity they became most frequent, and few nations surpassed the later Romans in acts of barbarity.

The progress of this vice throughout this most enlightened continent has been analogous to all that has been stated of other parts of the world. Cruelty has universally diminished where the basis of national character has been pride, and it has remained uncorrected where the opposite modification has prevailed.

The nation that has retained the largest share of ferocity, which once was common among its barbarous ancestors, is that whose vanity is the most active—France. The cruelty of the French, too, differs from everything that has hitherto been related, or, could it be compared to any other, it must

be to the cruelty of the Jews. But the latter, never much enlightened, were finally driven to despair by besieging armies, and locked up within the narrow ramparts of their city. French cruelty, on the contrary, flourishes amid the most advanced progress of the social arts. It rages amid great urbanity, much apparent amenity, and a thoughtlessness which seems to bid defiance to deep-seated benevolence. Between this nation, however, in the hour of mirth, and in the hour of irritation, the contrast is hardly credible. The African avows his nature in his looks and gestures. The luxury of the Asiatic is the prognostic of his little love for mankind. But the courteous European ought to keep the promise of humanity which his politeness makes.

French cruelty is thoughtless and indiscriminate, and disorders never break out in the state without affording opportunities for indulging it.

Another characteristic is, the extreme generality of this vice in the people. In Asia the system of society abandons the bulk of mankind to the caprices of the great, but the mass of the nation is not cruel in the same proportion as the rulers. In France the sovereigns have been more merciful than the subjects, and the great examples of cruelty are the work of an infuriated populace. This assertion is supported, not only by historical facts, which proclaim the share that belongs to the monarchs and to the people, but by the opinion which is still entertained in France concerning some of the most cruel kings who ever governed that country. Francis I. murdered near twenty-five times as many of his subjects in one night, and with more ferocious accompaniments, than Mary of England did in her entire reign. Louis XIV. massacred and drove into exile a greater number of men than in England fell by the wars of York and Lancaster. Yet the admiration paid to the memory of these monarchs is not diminished by their atrocious crimes.

Another circumstance attending French cruelty is, it has not been diminished by the progress of social improvement. The transactions of the last years of the eighteenth century are as ferocious as any that preceded them, and the massacres then committed almost

every former period. So large a portion of French improvement consists in luxury, so much vanity has been added to it by a vicious but splendid government, that benevolence has undergone but little augmentation.

Another aggravating truth is, that French cruelties have always been committed by one part of the nation upon the other, when both the contending parties were of course equal in civilisation. A humane and civilised nation, struggling with ferocious barbarians, may be so exasperated as to forget its natural moderation, and to become as cruel as its antagonists ; but when it fights within itself it has no ferocity to excite its vengeance but its own. It is thus, pure and unalloyed by foreign inhumanity, that the cruelty of nations ought to be judged.

To specify the grounds upon which this charge is made would occupy too much of the text, and might disgust the reader. Examples are given in the notes, every one of which has been extracted from French historians, who certainly did not intend to calumniate their country\*.

The charge of cruelty so often brought against Spain rests upon different grounds. The establishment of a tremendous court of inquiry, a permanent monument of intolerance and persecution—the Spanish Inquisition—has excited more general indignation than all the cruelties of France ; but this feeling is unjust. A tribunal which can disfranchise reason, and make conscience illegal, is to be sure an unwarrantable engine of government ; but the interposition of the law, with its formalities and delays, is a proof that ferocity is not so ardent in the pursuit of blood, as when the populace are allowed to execute, with their own hands, the purposes of their unbridled malignity. Legal persecutions, in which some form of process is required, are always less sanguinary than popular insurrections ; and the dragonades of Louis XIV. were so bloody, only because the application of the law was committed to bands of soldiers, whose discipline was purposely relaxed. Since the first heretic was condemned to the flames by the Inquisition of Spain, to the

\* See Notes on this Chapter at the end of the volume.

present hour, so many Protestants, Jews, or Mahometans were not sent to death by it as were massacred by the monarch whom the French call Great, and who has, in their opinion, bequeathed his name to the age in which he lived. The first Spanish inquisitor, Torquemada, is said to have condemned at the most two thousand heretics—two-thirds of the number which Francis I. massacred in a single night. Yet the name of Torquemada is held in abhorrence, and Francis is hardly remembered as a murderer. The time employed by courts of justice makes recollection dwell upon their proceedings, while memory glides as rapidly as time itself over the hurried executions of popular fury. The solemnity of judicial processes, the imposing apparatus of what is deemed justice, leave a more awful impression than the tumultuous rage of a mob. Yet the most sanguinary tribunal which the world has ever beheld—the revolutionary tribunal of Robespierre—employed at least sixty times as many days as the Septembrisers of the former year had employed hours to destroy as many victims. The blood that has been wantonly shed in Spain since the first page of Spanish history is not equal to that which the French have spilt in a single year of their late revolution. The Inquisition, too, had an object in view, enhanced by the oppression inflicted by infidels. But the Jacquerie, the Frondeurs, had none in their indiscriminate massacres; neither can the devourers of human flesh have any end, political, religious, or moral, in their horrid festivals. It is probable that, had the Spanish territory not been overrun by Moors—had Mahometans never overwhelmed it with blood and misery, the Inquisition would not have been more permanent there than in France or Italy.

Another charge against the Spanish nation is, the cruelty which they showed to the Americans. Certainly the characters of the Peruvians and Mexicans did not authorise such treatment, and the conduct of Fernand Cortez is atrocious. Yet the critical situation of the Spaniards in the world which they had invaded, at the sixteenth century, is a better excuse for their enemies than any which the French find for their much greater ferocity among the

the nineteenth. In civil wars and intestine massacres, the nation in which they occur must bear the sins of either party ; and, in the religious wars of France, both Protestants and Catholics were Frenchmen. The Germanada was the most flagrant example of national massacres in Spain, and that was comparatively moderate\*.

It has been asserted that the British nation has shed more blood upon the scaffold than any in modern, or perhaps in ancient history ; but this charge is quite unfounded. Judicial executions have, indeed, continued longer in England than in any other nation, and the persons condemned to death by the slow and solemn processes of law were generally of a very elevated station. Many pages of British history are stained with the account of juridical murders, but the hands of the British are not the more steeped in blood on that account. Quite the reverse. The horror which such executions excite is the reason why the historian dwells upon them ; and, had they been more numerous, he could not have had time to commemorate the particulars. When Philip VI., after an insurrection in Flanders, condemned ten thousand Flemings to be tortured in the space of three months, the recital in Velly occupies three lines ; but the deaths of Llewellyn and of his brother, of Wallace, of Lady Jane Grey, are told with all the circumstances which can impress them upon the mind. When the Duke of Alva boasted at Madrid that, during his administration of the Low Countries, eighteen thousand persons had been executed on the scaffold by his order, one sweeping phrase includes the whole transaction, together with thirty thousand more who perished for religion by other means ; but when the reign of Mary is described by English writers, every particular which can excite compassion for the victims and indignation against their murderers is told, and the reader forgets that the cruelties of our most detested sovereign were multiplied one hundred and twenty times in the Netherlands.

That the proportion of juridical murders was so great,

\* See Note B. at the end of this volume.



and at so unripe a period of British existence, denotes an early attachment to the forms of law, which has been a happy characteristic of that empire down to the present day. It is a fortunate omen for a nation, when the antiso-  
cial feelings are not too impatient to wait for the delays of law; and the hope that humanity will increase, is better founded on the frequent recourse to tribunals, even for unjust ends, than on the prompter distribution of rewards and punishments by an irascible populace.

In the entire history of England, as many persons did not perish on the scaffold as in the three months' execution of Philip VI. in Flanders, neither was the manner of their deaths so cruel. They were, indeed, persons of more renown, and of higher standing in society; but when executions are confined to the leaders of factions and insurrections, the number of victims must be more limited than when inferior agents are destroyed. The fury of France, whether regal or popular, has always been directed against the subaltern actors, and the great have been spared out of political superstition for superior rank. Though in England no such motive stayed the hand of justice or revenge, yet the importance of the victims, their real value in society, multiplied by their numbers, was not so great as to cause such injury to the nation, or to deserve such a reputation of cruelty, as the repeated massacres of inferior men in France.

Another prominent consideration is, that, in England, cruelties have not principally been committed by the people, but by the rulers and the great; consequently, that the nation must be censured less for perpetrating, than for tolerating such acts. Thus, they have been less numerous and indiscriminate, always committed with some determinate view, and not out of unmeaning impulse. The most atrocious example of popular fury in English annals, is the insurrection of Wat Tyler; yet let this be compared, not with the Jacquerie, but with some of inferior atrocity, as the riots of the Maillotins, for instance, which were cotemporary, and the mildness of the English populace will be most evident.

The abhorrence of the nation for this vice appears in the



opinion which they entertain of the sovereigns in whom it was the most offensive. The princes of the contending houses who thus signalised themselves, are held in detestation. Henry VIII., notwithstanding the benefit of the Reformation, is regarded with abhorrence; and his unrelenting daughter is still more execrated. Even Elizabeth would be more esteemed, had the fate of Mary of Scotland been different, and had Essex not paid so severe a tribute for his presumption. No glory, no talents, could make the English venerate ferocity upon a throne; neither would they bow to the memory of a sovereign who, to save a province from the purposed invasion of a civilised foe, laid waste his territory from Avignon to Valence, and drove the inhabitants from their homes with an army of protecting countrymen, worse than the enemy which threatened them from without.

Lastly, the cruelty of the British has, with as much regularity as can accompany human concerns, diminished progressively, and its diminution has kept due pace with the development of social improvement. The Druids of Britain were as sanguinary as those of the Gauls. The massacre of the Romans was as dreadful as anything recorded of other European savages. The murder of the Danes, near a thousand years later, had the same character of vindictive ferocity, but neither were unprovoked. Succeeding ages have seen no renewal of such scenes in Britain, and every popular commotion has been somewhat milder than the preceding. The excesses of Wat Tyler were greater than those committed by Cade. The civil wars of the seventeenth century were less sanguinary than those of the fifteenth. The second revolution of Britain—that which finally expelled the house of Stuart—cost less blood than the first, which murdered the king, but did not deliver the nation. Let the conduct of France toward the house of Stuart, her ally, and to the wretched Henrietta, daughter of the most beloved monarch of that country, and who was left by the children of Henry IV. without money to buy fuel in winter, be compared with the munificence of England to the Bourbon princes, the unprovoked allies of revolted America, all of whom, together with their followers, enjoyed opulence in

this country during twenty years of exile ; and her benevolence to the great must be acknowledged, if not more worthy of the poet's song, at least a better theme of praise. At the revocation of the edict of Nantes, six thousand three hundred French Protestant families were provided for in England. At the revolution of France, 1789, more than one hundred thousand French emigrants, most of whom had lent their aid to the independence of the United States, were relieved there more than twenty years, at the expense of near six millions sterling. In the melancholy catastrophe of the earthquake at Lisbon, George II. sent a message to Parliament to request assistance for that wretched city. The Parliament, though not satisfied at that moment with the Portuguese government, empowered the king of England to send what sums he pleased to the immediate relief of the sufferers, and promised to defray him to any amount in the next grant of subsidies. To the honor of Spain be it said, that the monarch of that country also contributed largely. After the explosion which, in 1807, destroyed a part of Leyden, then under the sway of the French, a British frigate was dispatched, under a flag of truce, to carry money and other necessaries to the victims. She was fired upon by all the forts and batteries near which she passed, yet she succeeded in landing her cargo of benevolence.

As the English have advanced less in vanity and luxury than in pride and civilisation, their humanity has constantly increased ; and cruelty would this day excite such horror, that every plot in which it were to play a part would be sure to find an informer\*.

The cruelty of the Scotch was of longer duration than that of the English. Social improvement was more tardy in making its progress there. The connection with the Guises, and with the most ferocious factions of the French, fomented this spirit ; but since the island has become more enlightened, the provinces north of the Tweed do not yield to any in the virtues of charity and benevolence.

The only act which can be compared with the massacre

\* See Note C. at the end of this volume. .

of St. Bartholomew is, the murder of the Protestants by the Irish Catholics in 1641, and this involved even greater numbers in proportion to the population. But it was not more corrupt or cruel, and the perpetrators were more ignorant, than the court of Charles IX. Ireland, at similar epochas, affords more traits of ferocity than either of the other portions of the realm, and the very ardor, the enthusiasm, the generosity which, at this day, characterise the benevolence of Irishmen, are the remains of impetuous feelings, not quite subdued by reason and reflection. The fertility of Ireland disposes its natives to more vanity than Englishmen can feel.

The northern nations of Europe are confirmations of the doctrine that humanity increases according to the progress which proud nations make in social improvement. The Swedes and the Danes were once as ferocious as northern savages can be ; but their later history shows how much they have improved. The Russians also have made rapid strides in the virtues of humanity. Not a century ago they had all the barbarity of the North joined to the ferocity of Tartars. But their more frequent intercourse with Europeans of late has softened them ; and, though they still retain many cruel practices among themselves, they have abolished many which not long since were general and habitual.

A virtue which, indeed, is the summary of every other virtue, and which most particularly belongs to pride, is truth. Did men not feel that they had something in their natures which it behoves them to conceal, there would be no motive for lying. But pride is above such subterfuges. Conscience points out that they are wrong—reason tells that they are impolitic, and both counsel honesty and truth. Vanity, which would rather seem than be good, is not withheld by these motives from deceit, and sophistry is one of the habitual means it uses. The truest nations have always been the proudest, as the histories of Rome and England demonstrate ; and the vainest, as the Greeks, both ancient and modern, the modern Italians, the French, have been those in which veracity has been the least respected.

No nation, however, has existed in which this quality has been praised as highly as it should be ; perhaps, indeed, it is not within the bounds of human possibility to pay it all the respect which it merits. As long as there are vices or frailties—as long as self-love may be wounded, there must be exciting causes for concealment ; and, until mankind is perfect, truth will sometimes be a libel. Even in England this is a maxim of the law, and detraction, though founded on fact, is punishable. Even there, too, the distinction between public and private virtue is not sufficiently marked ; for though the man of integrity commands more confidence when in a public station than a man of known profligacy, yet the constitution of society allows too much latitude to vice in power. This, it is said, arises from the respect due to domestic life, from the principle that every man's house is his castle, and that the law now fortifies him within it more securely than all the battlements of feodality ever could. Domestic privacy should be respected only as long as it deserves respect ; but when it infringes the law, it must be thrown open to the law ; when it insults public opinion, public opinion must be its scourge ; and then both law and opinion are entitled to break through all its defences. In proportion as absolute morality increases, this maxim will become prevalent ; and if any one criterion were to be taken as the measure of national morality, it would be the value allowed to truth. In proportion as truth is respected, the virtue of mankind increases.

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### PART III.

On the Reaction of the different Modifications of Morality upon the Characters of Nations.

THE advantages and the disadvantages of absolute and of conventional morality are so evident, that a few examples are sufficient to point them out.

It was while morality was the most conventional, that the progress of the species was the most confined. In the ~~on~~

and idleness of the early world few advances were made toward the virtues which adorn the society of civilised men, and few steps toward any of the other improvements which give comfort and security to modern nations. The four great Eastern empires were debased in every moral quality, and they labored under all the grievances of despotism. Their conventional virtues, little different from real vices, rendered them not only unworthy, but incapable of every better government, and condemned them, along with all the rest of Asia, to see the world proceed without them. The same cause contributes still to keep that quarter of the globe in depression, and to make it linger in darkness, while two new continents, by taking a different path, have left it far behind.

But as soon as morality became a little more absolute, as it did in Greece, better systems of society arose. Republics sprung up in lieu of despotic states; wisdom increased; men became capable of nobler things. Under still greater difficulties, the Roman Commonwealth was formed, and continued to flourish, until national virtue, yielding to the enervating influence of uninterrupted prosperity, ceased any longer to be absolute; and the worst of empires rose out of the ruins of the best of republics.

A new era began when the morality of Christians, still nearer than any that had preceded it to being absolute, took the lead. Then the virtues which once were thinly scattered through society, became common, and the whole mass was raised to the level of those who before were the prominent points. As new virtues were developed, new advantages accrued to Christian nations, but always in direct proportion to the nature of their virtue. Where fanciful rules of conduct were established, prosperity was less; and the regions which tolerated idleness shared the fewest solid benefits. Thus the South of Europe, where morals were not founded on positive principles, did not attain the same ratio of success, in reason of its natural advantages, as the North; and, in the North, the nations who the soonest adopted positive principles, the soonest reached the great ends for which human society seems to have been esta-

blished. Italy, Spain, remained behind. France did not enjoy the results due to such natural advantages as she possessed. England rose far above them all, even before the reformation of religion had reformed morality. In the conflict which followed the time of Luther, as many shades of morality as of religion sprung up; and no period of history more thoroughly shows the necessary dependence of national happiness upon absolute morality than the years which have elapsed since his death. What Christianity formerly did in favor of pagan morals, protestantism has done to benefit Christian virtues, by rendering nugatory the useless fancies which once were held most important, and substituting absolute precepts in their room. As morals become purer, social happiness will increase, for it is only by virtue that men feel the desire to be truly free. Liberty never has accompanied conventional morality, neither has despotism ever long resisted the attacks which public virtue has made to destroy it. In very early ages simplicity is enough to confer rude happiness; in more advanced periods the only source of lasting strength and splendor to a nation is absolute morality.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### ON GOVERNMENT.

#### PART I.

##### On the Causes which promote and modify Government.

**THE** principles upon which government is founded, and which make the social compact natural to man, are, like the principles of all his feelings and of all his actions, innate. It is by a power which Nature herself has implanted in his breast, that two human creatures could not see each other in a desert without being attracted to each other. Instinct and reflection, happiness and interest, prompt mankind to social union, and are the sources of all the good which is derived from it.

But it is impossible even for two human beings to live together, unless both agree to give up a little of the independence which belongs to each while separate and alone. Thus a compact is tacitly formed, the ostensible basis of which is the equal participation of advantages.

But this equality cannot last; for it rarely happens that any two men possess exactly the same degree of every endowment which can maintain it. A larger portion of benefits will accrue to him who is the most richly gifted, and the compact is necessarily established according to the ascendancy which one party is qualified to assume over the other. Thus every society may be resolved into two members—the superior and the inferior, who soon become the governing and the governed. So constant is this principle, that it is transmitted to generations; and the opinion of superiority, ideal or true, is allowed in the descendants of those whose claim was first acknowledged. The most obvious means of superiority is physical strength; but a very little advancement in social life teaches that there is a

nobler source—the mind. The former may almost be computed by numbers ; the latter follows a different arithmetic, and, by combining individuals in closer and more intellectual union, gives predominance to the enlightened few over millions of the ignorant. The surest method, then, of establishing a just partition of rights and privileges, is to make wisdom general ; to give to as many members of society as possible the intellectual development which unites the divided powers of men, and directs them to the best advantage.

But such renunciations of personal and individual rights as the wisest forms of the social compact demand, are not made without sacrifices ; and it is not enough to know that they are necessary. Men must have the self-command to execute them. For speculation wisdom is sufficient ; for practice, self-denial, moderation, virtue, are indispensable.

These, then, are the immediate qualities upon which the just distribution of rights and privileges is founded. Nothing, indeed, but folly and vice could induce the bulk of mankind to give up the immunities with which nature has endowed them, or blindly to resign into the hands of a small minority the power and privileges so evidently intended to be shared by all. Every degree of submission beyond that which it is necessary that each individual should pay to the community for the benefit of the whole, is derogatory to the dignity and interests of men, and can proceed only from ignorance, which deprives them of the power of discerning what is good, or from depravity, which makes them indifferent to its enjoyment.

Every society in which the mutual exchange of benefits is not fairly balanced, is composed of oppressors and oppressed ; and either the governing or the governed, but most probably both, are infected with vice or folly, in exact proportion to the useless inequality which subsists between the sovereign and the subject.

The natural circumstances in which this inequality is the least, are those which render men the most useful to each other ; which call into action their wisdom and virtue ; which turn their social improvement toward civilisation,



their religion toward piety, and their morality toward the things which are right in themselves ;—in a word, superable difficulties. The most unquestionable truth that could be pronounced in political philosophy is, that the proudest nations of the world have always been the best governed ; and that the vainest are those which have labored under the heaviest weight of despotism.

Although governments are as different as the minds of nations in which they are established, they may all be comprised between two extremes—that in which the people entirely govern themselves, and that in which they are entirely governed without their own participation. The degrees between these modes are infinite, and contain all the diversities which have been known in every age. The former constitutes absolute democracy, the latter absolute despotism ; and, though neither is frequent, yet the most usual tendency does not appear to be that in which the people have the greatest share in their own concerns. The mixed and imperfect nature of human beings has hitherto made it impracticable. Absolute democracy, in speculation, is the ideal beauty of human society. It is absolute virtue and wisdom, practised on the largest scale. But the most perfect societies have not known it ; and the attempt to introduce a system so far beyond their reach has usually terminated in an opposite result.

The ignorance and the vices of men have allowed a nearer approximation to the other extreme ; and the finest regions have invariably groaned under forms of rule which are more nearly allied to despotism than to democracy. This is the most wretched state in which the social system can exist ; and this is the situation in which the old continents of Asia and Africa have continually lingered.

The most recently discovered quarter of the world has adopted a system intermediate between these two ; and feeling that absolute perfection is beyond the lot of men, while something better than absolute despotism is within their reach, Europe has eagerly pursued the path which leads to attainable good in the political system. The utmost wisdom and prudence could alone shape out this course ;

and the modes of government resulting from them are in stricter analogy with the imperfect nature of man than any which ever were conceived before. They have more completely provided remedies for his defects, and they have taken more effectual advantage of his good qualities, than all that had been devised in the older continents.

But, whatever be the forms under which these intermediate modes may be disguised, they must all be judged of according to one common rule—the degree of liberty, security, and happiness which they confer upon the majority. Many deceitful distinctions have been made, but they have served only to delude mankind. Ideas of freedom have been attached to popular ascendancy; and this is the effect which should naturally follow. But as tyranny, no less than independence, increases as the sovereign becomes multiplied, the despotism of the many may be still more oppressive than the will of a single prince. The most certain method to prevent the abuse of power by either, is its division in such a manner as to produce an equilibrium, and to make deliberation necessary before action. This is the principle upon which mixed monarchies are founded; a form of government which, if democracy be the ideal beauty of the social system, constitutes its practical perfection when applied to wealthy, powerful, and extended realms. Whoever considers human nature in its just point of view, must soon perceive that, in its present state, something intermediate between extremes must suit it better than anything absolute; and that, finite itself, it cannot pretend to accomplish infinite ends.

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## PART II.

On the Progress of the different Modifications of Government among Nations,  
and on Colonies and Dependant States.

THE early governments of the world were patriarchal, but societies were small. The chief of the family governed his little community with equity, and his single authority was sufficient to regulate the simple concerns of his children and

relations. But the multiplication of the species modified this rule. Discretionary power, such as Abraham and Jacob possessed, can be intrusted to men only as long as the warmest and most impartial regard for the governed supplies the place of written laws; but when affection becomes too much divided, impartiality cannot be hoped for, and paternal rule becomes a fable.

The patriarchal form still served, in some respects, as the model for more extensive communities. Instead of a patriarch, a monarch stood at the head of society, and his authority was acknowledged without written laws. The oldest government of nations, that which immediately succeeded the rule of a father, was monarchical, and differed from the patriarchal principally in the number of subjects. Every ancient record speaks of monarchy as the first established power. Moses mentions the monarchies of Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, Elam; and the nations near the Jordan, and in Palestine, were subject to kings. Profane history bears the same testimony, and Homer seems to have no notion of any other government. The Chinese boast that, during a long series of ages, they were governed by kings. All the Eastern world lived under monarchical rule; and the empires discovered in the West further show that monarchy was the lot of all infant societies. Even had patriarchal authority not set a practical example, it is probable that the simplicity of this mode of government would have made it at once admissible among ignorant communities.

When human beings first united in society, every town, every camp, every collection of men had its monarch. In the single valley of Siddim five kings were warred against by four in the time of Abraham. In Palestine, Joshua defeated thirty-one monarchs; and Adonibesec confesses that \* ‘ Three score and ten kings, having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table.’ Egypt was once divided into many separate states; and the provinces of Japan and China were distinct sovereignties.

\* Judges i. 7.

The greatest empires of the ancient or of the modern world were but aggregations of smaller states ; and by swallowing up the petty districts of Italy, and afterwards of Europe, Asia, and Africa, the little city built by Romulus reigned over the whole earth.

Under the rule of monarchs possessing limited territories, and still retaining something of the patriarchal spirit, a considerable degree of liberty continued to exist. But freedom was not regulated by any compact, as in recent times. As the authority of fathers had been absolute, so was that assumed by the first monarchs, and neither was restrained by any stipulations. But monarchical, like paternal power, was moderated, if not entirely by affection, at least by the recollection of that which once subsisted ; perhaps, too, by an untamed spirit of independence still remaining among the people. The first monarchs were not despotic, and few of them could have exercised such acts of authority as the chief of a family put in practice, to keep in order his wives, his children, and his slaves. But, in more extensive empires, the case was much altered. Large masses of mankind cannot enjoy liberty with so small a portion of wisdom and virtue as can secure it to limited communities. In Assyria and Babylon, among the Medes and Persians, tyranny was complete, and augmented with every increase of territory and population.

The principle upon which multitudes, in those very large empires, submitted to monarchs, could not procure them liberty. The greatest qualification of Nimrod, for instance, who so early acquired power, seems to have been that he was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Yet this qualification was necessary at a time when the earth was covered with forests, and the forests filled with wild beasts. Such a state was ill calculated for framing constitutions, and the power of Nimrod was necessarily proportioned to his dexterity in a sport so useful. He was selected to rule as the person most capable of removing the difficulties which weighed upon his subjects, and their trust in him was as great as the services which they received. The empire which he founded continued to flourish, under the despotism

of his successors, until a little more than five centuries before the Christian era ; and to the present hour the regions which it occupied have not known a single day of liberty.

Though much time elapsed before any real progress was made towards balancing authority and submission, yet the choice of the Medes was directed by a different motive, when they placed Dejoces at the head of their empire. This people having shaken off the Persian yoke, remained without any precise form of government, until they were beset with all the horrors of anarchy. There was among them a man whose principal qualities were wisdom and prudence, and to him they referred all their disputes. But Dejoces, soon harassed by their eternal discords, withdrew himself from public life. Confusion began again ; and the Medes discovered that their only resource was to appoint a king. Now, though the election of this man, unlike that of Nimrod, was founded upon intellectual qualifications, and bespoke a more advanced state of civilisation than prevailed among the subjects of the mighty hunter, yet the Medes were not more free than the Babylonians. Dejoces became despotic, and his tyranny was founded upon the most permanent basis—the depravity of his people. His successors pursued the same system. They shut themselves up from the sight of their subjects, and ordered that the same honors should be paid to them as to the gods. Their will was law, and to propose an alteration was death. The progress of reason, from the time of Nimrod to that hour, did not contribute to increase or to extend political liberty, but rather to make despotism more secure, and to refine upon the modes of tyranny.

The government of Persia was equally despotic. The king was adored as in Media. His palace was considered as a temple, and no person could enter it without his permission. The whole country was ravaged to procure enjoyments and luxuries for his wives or concubines. Towns and provinces were allotted for particular pieces of splendor ; and an ambassador spent an entire day in traversing a district which was called the Queen's Girdle, and a second before he could reach the limits of her head-dress. . Xerxes

published an edict promising a recompense to the person who would invent a new pleasure; and Cambyses, having illegally married his sister, was found excusable by a law which permitted the kings of Persia to do whatever they pleased.

Of all the departments of intellect none has been more unfortunate in Asia than political wisdom. The countries which have just been examined, have not advanced in it since the days of Nimrod; and it might almost be doubted whether, in any one of them, the choice of a sovereign would, at this moment, be founded upon the principle which determined the Medes in the election of Dejoces. Neither have these countries, at any intermediate period, shaken off the original tyranny which weighed upon them, or known the slightest diminution of oppression. Wherever the Greeks or Romans went to conquer, they found the people enslaved and sovereigns despotic. The kings of Parthia were as absolute as any that ever reigned in Persia. They were adored like those of the Medes, and called the kings of kings, the brothers of the sun and moon. In Asia Minor Mithridates was not less absolute, and not an exception could be found to the unvarying despotism of the East. A few small states, upon the borders of the sea, have, indeed, occasionally enjoyed a little more liberty; but they are too inconsiderable, and their situation is too unlike that of the rest of the continent, to enter into the general account of freedom and oppression.

During the time of the Roman empire a vast revolution took place in those countries; and, had they been capable of moral improvement, some disposition toward it must have shown itself during so important a change as that produced by Mahomet. But the propagation of his religion by military apostles powerfully seconded the bias of oriental minds; and the destruction of idolatry among the Arabs only riveted the chains of superstition and tyranny. But, if the entire country had not been strongly predisposed to slavery by the exuberance of natural enjoyments, it could not have so generally submitted, and the condition of the

antient Persians would not have been less miserable than that of the modern.

The Mahometan creed has done more to perpetuate slavery than any human institution ever has effected. By mixing together things sacred and profane, and prohibiting change, it has shut the door against all advancement. The nations that have adopted it have condemned themselves to remain stationary amid a progressive world ; and to be thus stationary is to be retrograde. The despotism of Persia is certainly not less now than it was two thousand years ago. The tyranny of Hindostan is the same. Asia Minor has suffered as much from the oppression of Tartar princes and Mahometans of every kind, as from the worst of her native sovereigns. China has not advanced, and the innumerable dynasties which she reckons have not given her liberty. Such is the melancholy picture of every part of Asia ; and mankind is condemned to perpetual infancy in the regions of perpetual pleasure.

The Egyptians, prouder than the nations that preceded them, and instructed by necessity, are said to have invented the rules of government and the science of domestic policy. In about four centuries after the flood the kingdom was in a flourishing condition, and power was better distributed than in any part of the known world. The territory was divided into provinces : there was a council of state, ministers, prisons for different crimes, priests with settled salaries, public granaries, a commerce of slaves, with many things denoting what might then be termed a well-organised society. The monarch, too, was surrounded with considerable pomp ; and the golden collar, the ring, the splendid robe which Pharaoh gave to Joseph prove that the arts of luxury had made some progress. The throne was hereditary, and a great body of wise laws and prudent regulations maintained good order. Justice was tolerably well administered, and the judges who were its organs took an oath, at the moment of their installation, to disobey the sovereign, should he at any time command them to pronounce an unjust sentence. But what more than anything

contributed to moderate the despotism of Egypt, was the inquest held upon the life and conduct of the monarch after his death, and without which he could not be buried. The apprehension of what the posthumous opinion of his subjects might be was a check upon his disposition, and showed an ascendancy in the public mind not to be found in the other states of antiquity.

This condition of things continued, with some little variations, for many centuries; but its advantages have been perpetually declining since other nations have risen to superior civilisation; and at this moment Egypt is one of the most miserable provinces contained in the whole empire of Islamism.

The government of the Jews was of so peculiar a nature that it cannot be put upon the same footing as that of any other people. Nevertheless, amid many institutions immediately under the direction of Providence, many traces of human disposition may be perceived, and few nations afford more palpable demonstration of the influence of wisdom and virtue, in modifying the government of men.

As long as the Jews remained in Egypt their government was as good as their situation, in a country not their own, could permit. During their migration to the Land of Promise their rule was theocratical; but their Divine Chief employed human agents to govern them according to his will. The nation formed a kind of republic, at the head of which were the judges, invested with authority from God himself. But the vices and perversity of the Israelites, their levity, their irreligion, increased after they had conquered the land of Canaan, and they at length became incapable of republican forms. When Samuel, oppressed by age, incapable of fulfilling the duties of his office, delegated his power to his sons, who did not use it according to the will of the people, the elders assembled, and required of him to name a king, who might rule them as other nations were ruled. The description which Samuel gave them of the severe and humiliating authority of a king, when he told them that he would take their sons to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots, and their



daughters to be his confectioners, cooks, and bakers—that he would take their fields, and the tenth of their vineyards, and of their seed for his servants, and employ their man-servants, and their maid-servants, and their asses to his own use, and make servants of them all, did not deter them. As they persisted in their demand, a king was chosen, and Saul was anointed by Samuel to save the nation from the hands of the Philistines. After Saul reigned David and Solomon, under whom the kingdom became more powerful, and saw its golden age of splendor, if not of wisdom and virtue. But, after Solomon, the people were almost incapable of any species of government. Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah, with one or two more of their kings, indeed, deserve to be ranked among the best princes of history ; but the list of bad sovereigns who reigned in either kingdom, Judah or Israel, such as Rehoboam, Athaliah, Joram, Manasses, is not to be surpassed in any country in a like number of years. At length their ruin ensued, and Nebuchadnezzar was the instrument of their destruction. During their captivity the government once more became theocratical ; but the nation was not independent. Their sufferings under foreign subjection, however, had a little calmed their petulance ; and, on their return from Babylon, they formed a kind of republic under the protection of Persia, the high priest being the chief magistrate. But, during the two last epochas, the splendor of the Jewish empire was no more ; and, when they fell, they were the victims of anarchy and vice still more than of Roman arms.

In Africa, the progress of the political sciences has followed the same law, and the natural circumstances of that continent, which not only have made men of little value, but rather detrimental than useful to each other, have prevented them from uniting under the best forms of rule. Although some great empires have existed in the mildest regions, yet the average of that burning peninsula presents a still more melancholy picture than Asia, in this, as in every other particular relating to the improvement of the human species.

As in Asia, so in Greece, the early government was mo-

narchical. The names of Ogyges, Inachus, Cecrops, Cadmus, Danaus, who were among the first benefactors of their country, prove this fact. From Ogyges to Cecrops many kings occupied the Athenian throne ; and from Cecrops to Codrus five centuries elapsed. The kingdom of Argos was founded by Inachus ; Mycene, which afterwards swallowed up this little state, was established by Perseus, to whom many kings succeeded. Thebes and Lacedæmon were ruled by monarchs ; and the Cretan lawgiver, Minos, whose severe justice placed him among the gods, was the king of his island. Every testimony concurs to prove, that the first government of all the states of Greece was monarchical ; but the power, wealth, territory, and authority of the early Grecian sovereigns was small ; and the appellation was far from conveying the same idea as in modern times. Agamemnon, when elected chief of the kings that lent their assistance in the Trojan war, did not reign over as much land as some British noblemen possess. The sovereigns of Attica were the chiefs of a confederacy, and could execute no law until it had been approved of by the council, and submitted to the nation at large. Their principal function consisted in presiding over religious rites, insomuch that, in some kingdoms which afterwards became republics, a king of the sacrifices continued to officiate, though the office and the name were abolished from every other province of the state. The natural circumstances of early Greece were more favourable to liberty than those of any country which had preceded her in social advancement. Accordingly, Greece at the earliest period showed a stronger aversion to despotism, than was evinced by any nation of the older continent. Nor was their superiority confined to the modifications which they made in their monarchical governments. Some of them it led to a further improvement, and induced to attempt a species of policy, of which there was no precedent. The first republic which took a lead in power and splendor was Athens, and she was not encouraged to the experiment by the example of any state which she could have taken as a model.

Within forty years of each other, Thebes and Athens

changed their monarchical for a republican government. The former had possessed a series of kings renowned for their disasters, as Laius, Œdipus, Eteocles, Polynices, Xanthus, &c. The latter having been killed in single combat by Melanthus, king of the Athenians, his subjects resolved that no monarch should succeed him, and put themselves under the authority of a prætor, or stratagos, aided by four councils, composed of deputies from all the cities of Bœotia; but the republic did not flourish, and several centuries elapsed before it began to take its due share in the affairs of Greece. The victories of Epaminondas and Pelopidas came at a late period to raise their languid country, whose greatness was as short lived as the heroes that had created it, and after their death it sunk into its former obscurity.

Unlike to this was the lot of Athens. Although early under the dominion of kings, the Athenians were soon inclined to democracy; and, in the enumeration which Homer makes of the Grecian forces at the siege of Troy, it is upon them only that he bestows the epithet of people; but when Codrus had nobly sacrificed himself, this disposition appeared in the most grateful tribute to his memory, for, resolving that no man was worthy to reign after him, they declared Jupiter sole monarch. To govern under his jurisdiction, archons were chosen, at first for life; but this mode appeared to approach too near to royalty, and at the expiration of three centuries a modification still more popular was adopted. Their ardent passion for liberty, however, soon dwindled into a spirit of faction, and the citizens were perpetually at variance among each other; the power of the magistrates was not sufficient to restrain them, and the state was verging to its ruin. It does not appear, indeed, that any direct change took place in the balance of power and submission; but the hereditary chief had become annual, and that alone was sufficient to destroy the former equilibrium. The authority which, vested in a perpetual prince, is sufficient to maintain tranquillity, ceases to be so when, at the expiration of twelve months, it is to pass into hands unaccustomed to wield it. Hence arose, in a secondary point of view, the many disturbances which convulsed the city

during a great length of time, without adding anything to its liberties.

When the Athenians were wearied out by sufferings, incapable of democracy, and impatient of moderate restraint, they turned their thoughts to Draco, a man of acknowledged wisdom and probity, and thoroughly versed in the theory of legislation. Be it that the severity with which he has been reproached was inherent in his own nature, or demanded by the profligacy of his countrymen, he punished the slightest faults with death. Demades said that the laws of Draco were written, not with ink, but with blood ; and Aristotle held them to be remarkable for nothing but their cruelty. The liberty enjoyed under this system of government was not great ; the excessive rigour of the laws left them unexecuted, and the consequence was licentiousness and impunity.

Solon, venerated on account of the gentleness of his disposition, and entirely worthy of the trust reposed in him, was next applied to. He was perfectly acquainted with the extent of the evil which he had to subdue, and, acting with equal prudence and firmness, he left some of it uncorrected, in order to concentrate his attention on the most essential points. Alternately appealing to the reason of his countrymen, and to the authority with which they had invested him, he gave them, as he himself said, not the best laws which could be framed, but the best which they were capable of observing. In this profound and excellent view of the subject consists the entire practice of legislation, and he was the first who laid down the maxim, too little followed even yet—that in government theoretical perfection and abstract beauty are visions, and that the entire excellence of every modification of rule consists in its applicability.

The only law of Draco which Solon allowed to subsist, was that relating to murder ; and he new-modelled the organisation of the state. The places of trust and power he left in the hands of the wealthy, and these he divided into different classes, according to their property. As the lower orders, though excluded from the principal dignities, had the power of giving or withholding their assent to every proposition, he created a senate, with whom all la

to originate. The remedy, however, was incomplete, and well might Anacharsis wonder when he saw that in Athens the wise proposed, and the mad decided the question.

But the constitution of Solon was essentially vicious, even after all he had done to amend it. The senate was dependant on the people, and the Areopagus had no real share in the government. Hence arose the many disorders of the state—popular assemblies always tumultuous, always a prey to faction and intrigues, and led away by the most bold and furious declaimers. Even virtue was systematically proscribed, and ostracism always stood ready to chastise the man who was too brave, too patriotic, or even what was deemed too just. ‘Happy Athens,’ exclaimed Valerius Maximus, ‘to find citizens who, after such barbarous usage, still love their country.’

The various changes which took place after the death of Solon were far from confirming political liberty. The unjust suspicions of this people—their cruelty toward Alcibiades, Aristides, Cimon, Conon, Miltiades, Socrates, Themistocles—their jealousy of every great and good man who served the republic, did not preserve them from the intrigues of Pericles, or from the wiles and phalanxes of Philip. Their liberty fell in the arms of luxury and pleasure, and the most democratic of commonwealths the most readily abandoned its freedom for the arts of corruption.

The government of Sparta was more equally balanced, and more stable. It was monarchical in the beginning, and continued to be so, in form at least, long after many other states of Greece had become republics. A remarkable feature of this extraordinary people is, that, during many centuries, they were governed by two kings, who reigned together without inconvenience.

The form of rule which Lycurgus established seemed indefinable to the ancients, but it was a mixture of monarchical, aristocratical, and democratical power. Although there were two kings, their will was not implicitly obeyed, and they had little influence on the public deliberations. They were responsible to the ephori and to the people for their conduct, although they enjoyed certain privileges, and were

treated with great personal respect. The senate, intermediate between them and the people, was elected by the lower orders. In this assembly, public matters were discussed, but no decision had force of law until approved of by the nation; yet their authority was found to be too great, and ephori were added to the original constitution, to serve as a check. In the course of time, however, these magistrates, though annually renewed, became too powerful. They cashiered, imprisoned, and even put to death senators, and the kings were bound to answer them.

The government of Sparta, then, was more complicated than that of Athens. It, in fact, acknowledged many powers—two kings, five ephori, a senate, and the people. From these contending forces much disturbances might have been apprehended: yet Lacedæmon was the state of antiquity which suffered the least from internal factions, and Polybius declares it to be that which preserved its liberties undisturbed during the longest period. Modern experience teaches, that the division of political authority produces the internal peace of empires, with this improvement, too, that it is not now found necessary to separate it into so many parts; but that three great depositaries are adequate to produce the desired effect.

The laws of Lycurgus were the most in opposition with human nature of any ever devised. Not only individuals were forcibly wrested from the usual feelings and dictates of the heart, but the condition of society was founded on the most constant violation of every social principle. International policy, too, was equally in contradiction with the bonds which unite different communities. The most destructive equality, the most paralysing ignorance, the most entire abnegation of the best and strongest sentiments, formed the basis of Spartan prosperity—inhumanity and injustice were the virtues of the nation. What would the mother now be reputed who could smile to hear that her son had fallen in battle?—and which is most in conformity with nature, to weep or to rejoice at the death, however glorious, of a being who cost such pain and anxiety, to the most sensitive of human creatures? It is in vain, too

that Montesquieu would excuse the Spartan laws concerning theft. The security of property demands that the successful robber should be punished as rigorously as he who is detected in the act, and the policy must be essentially vicious which can make a distinction between them.

The real merit of the Athenian legislator consists in having given his countrymen the best laws which they were capable of observing; but the constitution which he framed was defective. Lycurgus, on the contrary, contrived an admirable constitution, but his laws were bad. The deficiencies of the Athenian charter were the immediate causes of the constant disturbances which took place, while the balance of authority, so happily introduced into Sparta, maintained a more lasting equilibrium. The genius of both these men was great, and it may be questioned whether Lycurgus, in so completely thwarting the habits of the Spartans—or Solon, in conforming himself to the manners, and in some measure to the vices, of the Athenians—gave stronger marks of sagacity.

The liberty enjoyed by these and other states of Greece may be considered as the most important of the early attempts made by men to deliver themselves from absolute government, and to give the people a share in what most concerns them. To an Asiatic despot, the idea of a republic must be as astonishing as it was to the monarch of Pegu, who was almost choked with laughter when told, that in Venice there was no king; but these attempts at freedom were abortive and ill-shapen, and bespoke the characteristic inexperience of the times. As the uncontrolled authority of a single monarch was the vice of preceding governments, it was that which an early essay of improvement would study to avoid, and it was natural for reformers to fall into an opposite extreme. The fault of the Greek republics, who conceived that kings were useless burdens to a state, was to allow the people too large a share of power. The liveliness and sensibility of the Athenians led them to commit this mistake, and impelled them farther than belonged to prudence.

It has already been observed, that early difficulties being



easily surmountable in Greece, vanity soon began to show itself there. This sentiment was felt long previous to Lycurgus and to Solon, and was manifest at a much more distant period than that in which they legislated. Whence came it, then, that freedom was established there?—that Sparta adopted a republican government, disguised under many of the forms of monarchy?—and that Athens, shaking off the last remnants of its royal robes, assumed the extravagant garb of utter democracy?

Had Greece, instead of being intersected by the sea, formed one compact whole—had the interior of the country not been broken by natural depressions and elevations, all the provinces might have been united into one single state; but that state would not have been a republic. The first experiment of every mode into which society can be organised must be made upon a small scale; and, as the earliest monarchies were not extensive, so neither were the first republics. Had despotism been established there, as in the vast regions of Asia, it would have denoted a retrogradation of intellect in the place and circumstances the most suited to make it advance; and when time had long taught men to be wiser and better than they were in the period of Assyrian splendor. The country situated to the south of Epirus and Thessaly, and which was bounded on the east and west by the Ægean and Ionian seas, which not only received the wisdom of Egypt and of the best parts of Asia, but opened new views and expanded new energies in the human constitution, seemed formed by nature to allow one vast step in the progress of political philosophy. It was formed to be the first seat of popular rule—the scene where men should first feel their own strength and importance, and assume the direction of their own concerns. And it is no disparagement to Greece to say that this new wisdom of the people was not complete there. No first experiment in morals ever yet left nothing more to wish for. It is the property of imperfect man to misapply or lavish every new-gotten means; and it often happens that the use of an instrument is best taught by its misuse. In Sparta, the people were drilled into freedom at the expense of every



national feeling and of every social tie. They paid the exorbitant price of the head and of the heart for a constitution which made them the slaves of liberty. In Athens, on the contrary, the people were not enough repressed; they retained too much of the power and privileges attached to numbers, and the abuse of their strength was frequent. Both these republics, too, were so small, although so flourishing, that their political wisdom wanted the development and generality which larger empires have conferred upon the first of sciences.

This difference in the constitutions of the two countries is attributed by Montesquieu to the barrenness of Attica, which made it incline to democracy, while the comparatively greater fertility of Laconia disposed it to be monarchical. But it is not thus that governments must be judged of; nor can they be appreciated by the mere words democracy and monarchy. The natural circumstances of both were not, in fact, sufficiently dissimilar to authorise such a conclusion. Neither the climate nor the fertility of the soil could be much unlike, and the productions were the same. Attica was full of rocks and mountains, but Laconia partook of the same disadvantages; for, though the low lands were well watered, and excellent for pasture, its hills impeded its general cultivation. Greater natural differences exist between many provinces of one empire, without producing any of the effects ascribed to them by Montesquieu.

Had Sparta been a populous empire, no efforts of legislation could have made it adopt institutions so very different from those established in Athens. But the number of its inhabitants did not exceed thirty thousand; and experience shows how easy it is to counteract the impulse of nature in so small an aggregate of men. The noble and disinterested conduct of Lycurgus on many delicate occasions had won him the superstitious veneration of his countrymen; and, although they were licentious and turbulent, they resigned into his hands their whole existence. He repressed their former propensities; he introduced customs directly opposite to their past practices; he set them a task of freedom such as no people ever undertook; he made a vain nation

proud ; and all this he accomplished by a sudden, bold, and radical change, of which persuasion was the principal means.

In every point, except the external feature of government, Athens was more royal than Sparta. Vanity, luxury, were greater. Many an Athenian demagogue was followed by more pomp than the Spartan kings. His palace was more splendid than their bipartite throne ; his authority more unquestionable, and his word of greater weight. No power in the Athenian state could have done to Pericles what the Ephori did to Agis ; and, while the latter was imprisoned by a constitutional magistracy, the former was traduced by the clamours of the people, whom he soon again deceived. A more rigid equality also prevailed in Sparta, and the only principle of aristocracy—that upon which the choice of senators was founded—was a pre-eminence in virtue and wisdom during a life of sixty years.

That the Athenians were unfit for such institutions as they had chosen, perpetual commotions, frequent changes from democratic tyranny to that of some favorite demagogue ; the flippant injustice with which they treated the generals who had won their battles, and the philosophers who had endeavored to enlighten them ; their jealousy of every person who rose to popular favor, most clearly demonstrate. By pursuing a liberty which, to them, was at best a phantom, they became miserable ; and their end might give a useful lesson to all nations who persist in a form of rule for which they are not calculated. Nevertheless, that system lasted more than two centuries, because the state was small and surrounded by others of similar extent and policy ; because a little republic was, so to say, solicited to exist by the circumstances of Greece and of mankind, and because such a government was suited to the times. But, from the days of Lycurgus to the battle of Salamis, five centuries of free tranquillity elapsed in Sparta ; or, if the period be extended to the Achæan league, seven centuries may be reckoned. Now if the tranquil duration of a compact entered into by men, be a *sure* of their reciprocal fitness, as it certainly is, it

confessed that the compulsory freedom of Sparta had moulded the Lacedæmonians into its own form more efficaciously than the licentious liberty of Athens had disposed the inhabitants of Attica for the extravagances of democracy.

The Spartan and Athenian characters were much more alike in early ages than they afterwards became; and as the divergence began about the time of Lycurgus, it must be attributed to his laws and institutions. They again became more similar when the observance of these was less rigorous. Athens, indeed, had fewer steps to make toward an approximation to nature, for she had never entirely relinquished her true disposition; but Sparta had to undo all that she had done. When gold was readmitted, however, and rigid virtue had declined, the Lacedæmonians reassumed the character which really belonged to them. They became the most voluptuous, the most profligate of men, and, like the rest of Greece, have continued vain, enslaved, and presumptuous, without independence or virtue, ever since the incursion of a more northern and a harder foe than they had defeated at Thermopylæ.

That the liberty of Greece was the effect of no permanent cause is evident from the time which has succeeded the victories of the Macedonians, and during which that country has remained in absolute bondage. The battle of Chæronæa was fought near twenty centuries ago; and, in that field, fell for ever the republics of Greece. Whatever form of government has existed since that day, liberty has been a stranger to it. Under Philip and his son subjection was established, gilded with all the glories which shone around the victor of Issus and Arbela, the conqueror of Darius and Porus. When the empire of Alexander was divided, had any wisdom or virtue yet remained, they might have shown themselves; but every sentiment of good was lost. In the Lamian war, when Leosthenes undertook to deliver the city from the yoke of Antipater, the wise, the good, the austere Phocion, who had every republican virtue in his heart, observed to the enthusiastic youth fired with the ardor of his great master, Demosthenes, ‘Young man, your speeches are like the cypress tree, fair and goodly to the view, but

‘ they can bear no fruit ;’ and the man who could refuse a hundred talents and the possession of five cities from Alexander, knew what virtue was. Consequently, the Macedonians again subdued the liberties of Greece, and Athens was reduced to admit, and to defray a foreign garrison in the fortress of Munychia ; to pay the expenses of the war ; to consent to deliver up her orators, Demosthenes and Hyperrides ; to abolish democracy, and to vest entire authority in the hands of the rich ; and Antipater, the friend and counsellor of Philip, was hailed as a father and protector. When, but a few years later, Demetrius Poliorcetes attempted again to restore the antient government and independence, his father Antigonus and he received the title of kings, of tutelary gods and saviours. A priest was ordained for them ; an altar was built upon the spot where Demetrius landed ; a thousand extravagances were committed in adulation of him ; a thousand cruelties were perpetrated against his enemies. The flattery of the Athenians, low and abject, far beneath the tone of noble gratitude in which they thanked Themistocles after he had destroyed the navy of Xerxes, showed that their souls were sunk below freedom. Their perfidy towards him bespoke a still blacker failing, and they were severely punished by his son Antigonus Gonatas, who reduced them to complete subjection. At length the Achæan league was formed, into which Attica, after many acts of ingratitude and deceit, was admitted ; and she continued to form a part of it until the Roman conquest. One hundred and forty-six years before the Christian era Corinth was reduced to ashes ; and that famous compact was buried under the ruins of the mighty city. Athens then was part of the province of Achaia ; but Sylla visited her with new calamities. In the civil wars of Pompey and Cæsar, the classic conqueror treated her with more becoming amenity, and spared the living out of respect for the dead. When he was no more, she espoused the cause of his murderers, and the statues of Brutus and Cassius were placed beside those of Harmodius and Aristogiton. She then became attached to Antony, who, in return, increased her domains. Germanicus granted her privileges which Tiberius confirmed ;

and Nero, in gratitude for the applauses bestowed upon his singing, restored to the whole of Greece her antient liberties. But what was liberty bestowed by him? Vespasian again brought Achaia under subjection; and, in the division of the Roman empire, it fell to the share of the emperors of the East. Constantine the Great still favored Athens, and gave her chief magistrate the title of Duke. Under Arcadius and Honorius the Goths reduced her nearly to ruin, and her fate has every day declined since that time. After many vicissitudes, and after passing through the hands of various foreign possessors, the splendor of her buildings was in some degree restored by a Florentine dynasty, naturally the protector of the arts, and she became the capital of a new state. But the conquests of Mahomet have fixed her doom for many centuries; and, with a short interruption by the Venetians, she has remained ever since the year 1464 in the hands of her most unworthy masters, the Turks. With the rest of Greece, she has made occasional efforts to be independent; but the cruelty, the perfidy, the ignorance, nay, even the vivacity of the nation, proclaim her unfit for liberty; and, if there be any truth in the consequences drawn from history and observation, the result will show that, although in the era of political ignorance and limited civilisation, the states of Greece might flourish as small republics, blessed with a little misshapen liberty, they cannot, in this advanced period, stand upon the same footing as the empires of the North, or recover a freedom which would disgrace the most absolute monarchy now in existence.

The fate of Sparta was similar to that of Athens, though the duration of her artificial virtues helped her to drag out a more protracted existence—for artificial virtue is better than spontaneous vice. An unfortunate attempt to restore the laws of Lycurgus, after corruption had become general, was made by Agis, but he lost his life in the vain undertaking. After the battle of Sellasia, where the Spartans were defeated by Antigonos, the authority of the Macedonians was hardly questioned, and to them succeeded the Achæans. In 188 B.C. the walls of the city were destroyed

by Philopœmen, and the laws of Lycurgus gave place to those of Achaia. But when the Romans became the masters of the Peloponnesus, they respected the memory of this great man too much not to restore his works ; and his laws were said to be in vigour so late as the time of Domitian, though, according to Pliny, only the vestige of liberty remained under Trajan. The subsequent fate of Sparta, as of all the Grecian cities, may be learned from what has been said of Athens.

It appears, then, that, although the general disposition of the Greeks belonged to the category of qualities derived from easy natural circumstances, political liberty was established there by the events of the time and country. But the constitutions and the laws in use were not such as required the utmost stretch of political wisdom. They may be considered as improvements upon the governments of Crete and Egypt, and as infinitely superior to the monstrous despotisms of Asia. The commonwealths of Greece cannot be compared with the monarchies of modern Europe for liberty, tranquillity, or power, and therefore they can exist no more. Every part of the ancient Grecian character, except the laws and constitutions of the republics, was in harmony with natural circumstances, and has continued the same through every change of fortune and of masters. But freedom has decayed, and, fleeting as the rest was imperishable, it has not yet been brought back to its earliest European abode ; nor does it promise ever permanently to return, unless the relations of society undergo some unforeseen revolution.

The second seat of freedom which occupies a large space in the attention of history is Italy, and particularly Rome. The provinces of this peninsula were, like other early states, principally ruled by monarchs ; and the first settlers who landed there from Greece were conducted by kings. The two most remarkable nations, before the arrival of Æneas, were the Etrurians and the Latins. The former, after existing long as a single monarchy, were divided into twelve districts, each of which had a sovereign

and all were subject to one common chief, thus forming a federative kingdom. Although the history of Etruria is frequently interrupted, from the time of its founder Janus to its final incorporation with Rome, the government did not change its form; and, in the reign of Romulus, the Lucumons existed, as did the common sovereign, in the person of Porsenna, after the expulsion of the Tarquins. Before the destruction of Troy, Latium was governed by many kings; and, after the death of Æneas, fifteen monarchs reigned there successively, more than four hundred years. At the expiration of this term Romulus appeared, and two centuries and a half elapsed in the kingly government established by him. The Umbrians and the Sabines had a similar form of rule with the Etruscans, and it was under their king Tatius that the latter sought to revenge the rape of their virgins.

The nation which finally absorbed the rest of Italy was created by a monarchical chief; but the modifications which it underwent considerably changed its nature, even while it was still a kingdom. The increasing population and power of Rome made the original compact insufficient for the purpose of good order, in a state which, during a single reign, had augmented the number of its citizens from three thousand three hundred men to forty-seven thousand.

The institutions of Romulus, his distribution of the people into tribes, centuries, and curias; the establishment of a senate; the distinction of patrician and plebeian, were well calculated to secure freedom and tranquillity. With the same attention he regulated the military and the religious concerns of his colony, and laid the foundations of wisdom, virtue, and power. He added many special laws to this constitution, and what he had begun was still further prosecuted by his successors. Under the seventh king, however, oppression became intolerable, and the vices of the court awakened the indignation of the people, who were far from being in a condition to submit to tyranny, or to partake in the corruption of which they were the victims. Tarquin the Proud, together with all who bore his name, or were



related to him, were expelled; the government was overthrown; the very name of king was abolished, and a republic was established in the room of an elective monarchy.

This revolution would have immediately destroyed the equilibrium of the state, had not the kingly power been committed to new magistrates—the consuls. As these men were patricians, however, the regal influence was thrown into the scale of the nobility, and the aristocracy received an importance which made it too overweening for the plebeians. The contemporaries of Lucretia possessed the simple virtues which make men fit for freedom; but they had not wisdom to provide a substitute for the yoke which they had shaken off, and never conceived that new combinations of the social system were indispensable, to fill up the vacuum which the demolition of the throne and sceptre had caused.

In consequence of this, various dissensions took place. One of the most virtuous citizens of Rome, the colleague of Brutus in the consulship, introduced laws which, being favorable to the people, restored, in some measure, their former importance, but the third power was still wanting. When the Latian confederacy was formed, the debtors and the poor refused to take up arms, and the only expedient which the senate could devise was, the nomination of a temporary magistrate, invested constitutionally with a degree of power which few tyrants or usurpers have possessed. After ten years of republican government, Rome committed her liberties into the hands of a dictator, who was more entirely master of her destinies than all her kings had ever been. To correct the fluctuations of power between the two orders, a temporary despotism was legalised, and the fate of the republic was occasionally confided to the will of a single officer, who was at no time responsible for any of his acts.

The severity with which the laws permitted patrician creditors to treat plebeian debtors, at length drove the people in rebellion to the Mons Sacer, and it was not till after several months that a compromise took place. A new office was then created, whose office it was to watch the interests of the people, in opposition to



every tax and servitude, inviolable and sacred in their persons, these tribunes, whose authority, unlike that of the dictators, was uninterrupted, could stop by their single veto the entire machine of government, and totally paralyse the authority of the senate and the consuls. Then again the weight of power became preponderant in favor of the populace, and the siege of the city by the haughty Coriolanus was the consequence. Neither did the encroachments of the plebeians end here. The number of tribunes, at first five, was doubled; ediles were created, and other innovations were attempted, tending to convert the republic into a complete democracy. The equal division of the conquered lands among the citizens was proposed, and the foundation of the Agrarian law and of innumerable tumults was thus laid. Elections, entirely popular, were substituted in the room of others less democratic, and the patricians were excluded from the assembly of the tribes. From this moment the government became altogether a democracy, and never again returned into the hands of the aristocratic party.

As yet, the unwritten laws of Rome depended, in a great measure, on natural equity and ancient usages. The tribunes proposed the introduction of more stable documents; and ten persons of the senatorial order were selected to prepare a code. But these Decemviri soon altered the nature of their trust, and superseded both the senate and the consuls. To perpetuate their power they took advantage of a defect in the Roman constitution, which required that extraordinary magistrates should terminate their own authority by voluntary resignation, and which certainly had its foundation more in the virtue than in the wisdom of the nation. But their excesses brought on their ruin; and the vices of Appius restored the rule of the consuls and tribunes, who, for once, united to oppose a common rival. The patricians, however, were supine, and the plebeians availed themselves of the security of their opponents to increase their own influence.

The advantages which this order possessed had become considerable. The mode of voting became such, that pre-

perty was outweighed by numbers, and the majority of voices, not of wealth, prevailed. The tribunes were elected by the tribes alone, from which patricians were excluded. Civil offices were disposed of by the centuries, and the *curiæ* had the nomination to military commands. When the purely popular tribes, extending their authority beyond their own order, began to frame laws, the senate denied their right, and the plebeians retorted by disputing the legislative authority of the conscript fathers. The power of the centuries only, in which every order of the state was present, was acknowledged, and their enactments alone bore the title of laws. The resolutions of the senate had but a temporary authority, and those of the tribes were called *plebiscita*, not *leges*. Thus, then, the patricians alone in the senate; the plebeians alone in the tribes; the patricians and the plebeians conjointly in the centuries, formed three legislative powers. And these powers were not united to improve the political system of their country, but remained contending sources of legislation, contributing more to the confusion and intricacy of the constitution than to its simplicity or perfection.

Two privileges yet remained in the possession of the patricians, which served as a barrier between them and the plebeians—the prohibition of intermarriage, and the ineligibility of the inferior classes to the supreme offices. But the plebeians had already obtained too much not to desire more, and the last rights of the patricians were invaded. The power of intermarriage, as the least important, was the first acceded to; but the other was contested on the grounds of religion, and the pretext that many ceremonies intrusted to the consuls could not, without profanation, be performed by persons of vulgar birth. A compromise was, however, agreed upon. Six new magistrates were instituted, three of whom might be plebeians and the other three patricians. These were called military tribunes, and no sacerdotal function was attached to the office. But, though the people carried the question of right, they always for many years, the military tribunes from the senatorial ranks. Ne

ing ; for, in a short time, the consular authority was reinstated. But, in order to diminish the fatigues of the office, censors were nominated to estimate, to number, and to distribute the citizens into their respective classes, and to watch over public morals. For one century, however, the censors were wholly patricians.

This separation of the consular power was a wise and prudent measure in such a state and time as the present. But the conclusions to be drawn from it in favor of Roman policy, are sadly modified by the frequency with which it was found necessary to confide the safety of the subjects to the virtue and moderation of a single man. In less than twenty years recourse was had ten times to the dictatorship; and, during more than fifteen years, the government fluctuated between consuls and military tribunes, as the tide of public affairs gave preponderance to patrician or plebeian influence.

The payment of regular salaries to the army, enacted about this time, seemed to promise a return of power to the senatorial order. This measure, become indispensable by the nature of things, placed the troops, in some degree, at the disposal of the senate. But the tribunes of the people, taking the pretext of some reverses which the Roman arms had suffered, raised clamours against the subsidies out of which they were to be paid, and set their veto upon all taxation. Such had been the leading spirit of the Roman government during about one hundred and fifty years which elapsed between the destruction of the monarchy and the burning of the city by the Gauls.

After the restoration of Rome dissensions began again. Sextus, a plebeian, was chosen consul; but his patrician partner would undertake no measures against a foreign enemy in conjunction with him, lest the newly admitted order should share the glory. The consular authority, too, was still further divided by losing the judicial power; and the plebeians obtained a new triumph in seeing the curule ediles, every second year, elected from their body; and, finally, Marcus Rutilius, a plebeian, dictator of Rome.

That such a division of power was necessary to the

foreign extension of the state, may be concluded from the successes which followed. A great part of Italy was subdued, and the most obstinate and formidable foe whom the Romans ever encountered there, the Samnites, submitted, after a contest of seventy years. Pyrrhus had retired from the peninsula, and his allies were reduced to obedience. The Gauls were no longer feared; and the masters of all the territory within the Tuscan and the Adriatic seas had leisure to turn their thoughts to more distant conquests. All this glory, too, was won amid examples of unparalleled virtue and self-denial in the service of the country; and the empire of the sea was annexed to the supremacy attained on land.

The balance of authority in this constitution, unsettled as it may appear in theory, must, however, in fact, have been more equally counterpoised than would seem from a first consideration. It is true that the plebeians, when admitted to every office, while the patricians were excluded from becoming tribunes of the people, had cast the scale unduly in their own favor. Their wealth and numbers, too, had increased, and the first and second classes of their order had risen to so much importance that, even in the centuries, they began to divide the votes. But the senate and consuls possessed two principal checks to the power of the plebeians, even after their aggrandisement; one of which was not quite in the spirit that should conduct a republic, though the other was constitutional. 1st. They might gain over to their party some of the tribunes who, by opposing their colleagues, might stop their proceedings. 2ndly. They could at once transfer the whole authority to a single unaccountable person, and, in a moment, supersede the pretensions of the tribunes and the people. The consuls, too, although they received their office from the plebeians, and were accountable for their conduct, had great power over the assemblies of every description; and the censorship, a branch of consular authority which was most tenaciously reserved for the patricians, still guarded their influence against undue encroachments.

During the prosecution of conquest in and out of

domestic tumults ceased ; and, taking into consideration the internal condition of Rome, which gave her liberty and tranquillity, as well as her foreign power which delivered her from every apprehension of attack, the epocha which succeeded the defeat of the Samnites, and reached as far as the sedition of Gracchus, may be held as the true season of Roman worth. The dissensions between patricians and plebeians had diminished, and wealth was of no avail in attaining rank or consideration. Services rendered to the country were the only titles to eminence. The man who set the greatest example of devotedness that ever Rome beheld, the consul Regulus, while commanding in Africa, was apprehensive that his family might die of want, and his little field was tilled at the expense of the public. All citizens were equally eligible to every office, and aristocracy had no foundation but personal worth. Justice was well administered ; the functions of government were duly filled ; the necessity of conquest kept every wish united, and private interests had ceased to disturb the general weal. The last of the indispensable triumphs which the Romans undertook was over the Samnites, who, if they had not been subdued, would inevitably have brought the newer city into subjection. But the impulse so long communicated to military ardor lasted after the impelling power had ceased to act, and led her legions, under the conviction of a fictitious necessity, to Zama, to Cynocephale, and to Pydna.

But the spirit which guided the republic was too democratic for lasting tranquillity. The two orders, indeed, had melted into one, and that one was necessarily popular. Immense wealth, and, with it, great immorality, had been introduced by conquests in Africa, in Asia, and in the south of Europe ; and luxurious indulgences were too congenial with the soil and climate of Italy not to be admitted as soon as its inhabitants could repose from labour.

The single order to which the citizens of Rome were reduced began to know a new distinction, more irksome, and not less injurious than that of patrician and plebeian, the governing and the governed. The enmity between these two divisions was embittered, as the offices of state

became not only honorable but lucrative, and factions arose to thwart all who were in possession of them. Ancient virtue was lost, and Roman policy was the most dangerous that could be devised.

Tiberius Gracchus appeared; and, turning the evils of the times to the advantage of his projects, he attempted to revive the Licinian law, which prohibited the accumulation of landed property. This law, which might, at the most, have suited the infant republic, was found impracticable even at the time when it was proposed; and one of the first who violated it was its author. How much more, then, must its revival, when Rome had so much increased her population, power, and riches, have been preposterous? and in what other light can the patriotism of Gracchus be regarded but as madness or ambition? Neither he nor his brother, however, wanted the many specious pretexts which demagogues always find when they make the welfare of the people the excuse for exciting tumults to promote their own views.

The seditions of the Gracchi were the forerunners of all the factious insurrections which ensued in the republic, and dismally prognosticated the contests of Marius and Sylla, of Pompey and Cæsar, of Antony and Octavius. They were, indeed, less bloody, because the Romans were then less depraved than they afterwards became; but they fully evinced that corruption had pervaded every rank.

New contests arose, and the popular party prevailed. Marius, once honorably employed in the defence of his country, became its scourge; and Sylla most unrelentingly washed away the blood which his rival had shed, in new blood. The unaccountable renunciation of this perpetual dictator was not demanded by the indignation or by the virtue of the people; for they who tolerated the means by which he acquired his power, would easily have borne his tyranny. Neither did his death give liberty to Rome. Lepidus, Crassus, and Pompey aspired at succeeding him, and the conspiracy of Catiline threatened the entire subjugation of the state.

But the most formidable candidate for supreme power

was Cæsar, who found the Roman people as ripe as the reminiscence of past glory, and the pressure of actual corruption could make them, to second his projects of military aggrandisement and private ambition. The first triumvirate was formed, and Cæsar, Pompey, and Crassus divided the republic. When the latter fell in Parthia, but two remained. A civil war was inevitable; and, in despite of the senate, the Rubicon was passed. Cæsar was named at once dictator and consul, and the fate of Rome, that is to say, whether she was to be the prey of Pompey or of Cæsar, was decided at Pharsalia. Some feeling of liberty yet survived in a few breasts: a conspiracy was formed against the enslaver of his country, and the tyrant fell. But tyranny survived, for Rome had become incapable of freedom; and the republican virtues of those who stabbed him could not suffice to make every citizen feel as they did. A second triumvirate, more bloody than the former, because Rome was more corrupt and vain, was composed of Lepidus, Antony, and Octavius, and the adopted son of the former conqueror, though not the heir of his magnanimity, succeeded. The tyranny of Augustus was adorned with all the splendor of his age, with its literary glory, its refinement, and its strength; but it was not less degrading on that account. The forms, indeed, of the old republic were maintained, but the spirit was lost. The elections of magistrates were the same as formerly; but liberty of choice was banished. Yet many of the Romans still thought themselves free; and when, five times in his long reign, the successor of Cæsar submitted to the formality of an election, they forgot that he commanded all the troops. The heirs of this first emperor, alternately severe, capricious, gloomy, wanton, ferocious, vain, obeyed their varying humours as they pleased, and stamped their separate characters on the despotism of their times. If, in later periods, some better sovereigns appeared, it was of their own free will that they were just and moderate, for the nation did not compel them to be good. If Vitellius was followed by Vespasian, if Domitian was preceded by Titus, it was not the Roman people, but their governors, who were humane. If Trajan,

Adrian, and the Antonines deserve to be recorded as the models of princes, it is because they found their noble qualities in their own hearts, not in the citizens of Rome. If a great and brilliant historian has designated the period which elapsed between the death of Domitian and the accession of Commodus as that during which the condition of the human race was the happiest, it was not because the ruling nation of the world had become more wise or moral, but because a succession of five good emperors made a stronger appeal to the remaining virtues, than to the increasing vices of their subjects. But nothing could utterly reform the Romans. Under Commodus they became again immoral and enslaved as they had been under Nero; and the bright gleams which occasionally shone became less frequent and less lasting. At length the empire was overrun; kingdom succeeded to kingdom during ages of desolation, until Charlemagne was proclaimed first patrician and emperor of Rome, and rewarded the chief of the church with temporal power. But as the imperial city rose again in splendor, she rose not in liberty. Intent upon binding mankind in the fetters of superstition, she paid no attention to her ancient freedom, and the men who the most cherished past prosperity were too much elated with the power of the sovereign pontiff to dream of constitutions. One or two mad attempts, indeed, to banish tyranny and restore the consular and tribunitian power were made, to diversify the monotony of protracted despotism, but in vain. Amid the various glories which Rome, at different times, has won, whether as head of the Christian church, as metropolis of the fine arts, the reviving mother of modern civilisation, the capital of learning, the emporium of ancient or of present magnificence, that which has been constantly wanting is liberty. Not a single advantage which ever was enjoyed by nations has been unknown since the restoration of intellect in Europe, and all have been held upon the easiest terms. The supremacy of the popes spent no Italian blood, but was founded on the willing weakness of those who submitted to it, and was maintained for centuries as it was established. The Romans were lively, sensitive, and imaginative, but not to be led



thoughtful, free, or proud, is the natural doom of all who come to life in Italy ; and he who would convert them into republicans must do as Romulus did ; he must place them in difficulties foreign to their warm and fertile situation, and create obstacles which have no dependence upon soil and climate.

The liberty enjoyed in the Roman republic was of a superior order to that which was known in Athens and in Sparta. The equilibrium between submission and authority was better maintained. The first rude sketch of the government by Romulus, the establishment of three powers, evinced a greater share of political wisdom than the former at any time possessed ; and it was not accompanied by such unnatural restraints and sacrifices as in the latter. When the kingly power, indeed, was overthrown and no adequate substitute was put in its place, the Romans showed less prudence ; and had no hardships, no reverses come most opportunely to compel them to be wise, the revolution might have been fatal. But necessity united them, notwithstanding the frequent broils of the patricians and the plebeians, and taught them the means of good government. Italy was not by nature portioned out, like Greece, into small divisions ; and the prospect of forming one state out of many was more probable. The tract of country governed by Roman laws and constitutions soon became greater than the Athenian or the Laconian states ; and still greater was the wisdom of subjects and of magistrates. Athens never saw a period so replete with political prudence and moderation as that which, in Rome, succeeded to the reduction of the Samnites, and preceded the sedition of Gracchus ; and though the thirty thousand Spartans might have been as free as the millions of the Roman dominions, they were but one tenth part as numerous, and were doomed to ignorance and inhumanity as the price of their restricted liberty. The grandeur of the domestic policy of Rome was unknown to the Greeks, and the Italian republics must be considered as a progressive step made in the science of government. It was better poised, more lasting, ruled over greater numbers, and was daily bringing new subjects under its sway. But

the vanity of Italy was less than that of Greece, and Romulus had checked it by factitious but positive necessities. Social improvement, too, was more allied to civilisation, and religion was less imaginative. It is not wonderful, then, that political wisdom, the noble science of government, should follow the general law of human progress, and be more perfect in the realms where it was of later growth.

The great rivals of Roman glory, the Carthaginians, were also their rivals in the political sciences. This people, so much resembling Africans in many respects, were yet, in some points of view, quite different from them. Their passions seemed to be the same, in nature and in energy, as those of their neighbours; but their wisdom partook of the characteristics which the difficult task of its founder imparted to it. The government of this state is said by Polybius to have been a mixture of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Aristotle asserts, that the republics of Crete, Lacedæmonia, and Carthage, were the best governed upon earth—that they were very much alike, but that wherever a difference did exist, the preference was to be given to the latter. It is not to be expected that the vanity of Africans should naturally be less than that of Greeks or Romans; but the Carthaginians, most advantageously placed for commerce, and urged to industry by the most favorable opportunities, used all their exertions to aggrandise the state, by labouring in the vocation to which they seemed appointed. Security of property is the first object of all who struggle to attain wealth; and, as trade would be ineffectual without the certainty of preserving what it gains, equity, justice, the stability of law are most important to it. Without good government, none of these can be hoped for, and of two nations equally urged to pride by natural difficulties, but one of which is called to martial, the other to commercial exertions, the latter will be more attentive to the preservation of liberty. This it was which gave to Carthage a larger share of freedom than was enjoyed by any other nation of Africa, and made her political wisdom disproportioned to every other part of her social improvement, long as the authority of the Suffites, the senate,

people was duly balanced, no state was more tranquil and happy than this famous city; but when the people assumed too large a share of power, and reduced the aristocracy to nothing, as in the time of Hannibal, misfortunes began, and the successful industry of Carthage led to the same corruptions as the military aggrandisement of Rome.

A stagnation of liberty, as of all social progress, succeeded to the fall of the Roman empire. The barbarians who came from the North were too ignorant to respect anything but physical force, and the countries which they subdued had long lost the virtues and energies which had made them free. The ancient republics were forgotten, and centuries elapsed before any nation thought of entering into the career of liberty. Immense changes, however, had taken place in Europe, and the whole population of the world had been stirred up from the very dregs. After the various invaders of Italy had either abandoned the territory, or had subsided into peaceful inhabitants of that beautiful country, the new era of civilisation began, and in its very outset presented features which immediately distinguished its political wisdom from all that had preceded it.

One of its earliest characteristics was, the disuse of a custom prevalent through every nation of the old world—slavery. This practice was of very early date, and was common even in the time of Abraham; it was established in Asia and in Africa; it prevailed in Cyprus and in all the Grecian islands; in the republics of Athens, Sparta Rome—in a word, over the entire known globe; and though the condition of the unfortunate creatures who were doomed to it might have been such in Athens as to authorise the assertion of Demosthenes, that it was better to be a slave there, than a freeman in any other country, yet it is dreadful to know that the number of helots in Lacedæmonia was, at least, four times that of the free. Another nation of antiquity, renowned for the wisdom of its institutions, received from the father of poetry the epithet of ‘bitter Egypt,’ and is mentioned in holy writ as making the lives of its Hebrew bondsmen ‘bitter with hard bondage.’

The abolition of slavery is said to be a consequence of

the feudal system ; but it is not easy to conceive in what manner a form of rule, as defective, perhaps, as any which had preceded it, should have put an end to the commerce of human beings. Benevolence, justice, certainly were not the characteristics of feodality, for its spirit was vassalage—a milder state of slavery, indeed, which protected the lives and properties of the lower classes, though not upon any steady principle, as in constitutional governments. A little effort of feodality would easily have brought back the unjust usage, however necessary the people might have been in the age of physical force, but the Christian religion never could have permitted it. Accordingly, it was in the most Christian countries that slavery was the earliest, and the most completely abolished. It was, indeed, introduced again into the New World, by nations not the best acquainted with civil liberty, and it was adopted in the colonies of others. Nay, the chief of the British republic sold the subjects of the country as slaves for his trans-Atlantic possessions ; but its worst abuses now could not be compared to what it was in the ancient republics ; and the present age, so remarkable for its hostility to every relic of feodality, has utterly abolished the principle, except in the federative republic of the United States of America.

With this benignant and enlarged principle of improvement, the second era of civilisation began. Its consequence was unbounded in favor of the multitude. Men felt their own importance in society ; and, in the very commencement of returning civilisation, that interference in their own concerns, which formerly they had abandoned to others, they confided to their own united strength and wisdom.

The first attempts, in this as in the former period, were upon a confined scale, and communities were formed of few elements. Some of the dispersed members of the mighty empire sought safety in union, and many states sprung up in Italy ; but those states were not monarchies—they were republics. It was not the kingdoms of the Etrusci, of the Latins, of the Sabines, that revived ; the republics of Venice, Spoleto, Friuli, Tuscany, Milan, Benevento, rose up in their room. The time was no more when the welfare of a

nascent community hung upon the life and exploits of a Cadmus, or even of a Romulus, but upon the feelings and faculties of the entire society, and of its uninterrupted generations.

The most remarkable of these states, that which, in the political sciences, as in many other departments of social improvement, formed the link between the old and the new era, was Venice. The commencement of Venice has been painted by Cassiodorus, in terms too rapturous for sober belief. The Venetians were represented by him as a nation of philosophers, almost without a failing. Their government was eminently republican, until the end of the seventh century, when Paulatio Anafesta was created Doge. Subsequent encroachments, however, on the part of the successor of this first magistrate brought about a revolution, which increased the power of the subject, and introduced a council of nobles and commons ; but, in the fourteenth century, the latter were excluded, and the rights of the privileged order were considerably modified. Amid the changes which took place during thirteen centuries at least, when the republic was engaged in many wars and internal commotions, the government was constantly in the hands of the many ; and though freedom may not have been quite as well understood there as it has since been in other nations, the Venetian constitution may justly be considered as a miracle for the age in which it was established—the result of much wisdom, virtue, and pride.

The other republics of Italy deserve less attention than this extraordinary state, which, being wholly maritime and commercial, had the strongest interest in giving security to industry. The foundation of the liberty of all, however, was commerce ; and hence it was that the south, more advantageously situated for that end, by projecting further into the great frequented ocean of those times, now the Mediterranean lake, beheld republican liberty arise there, while the north was still comprehended in the domains of the empire. The duchy of Benevento, for instance, once the land of the stubborn Samnites, was founded in the year 571, by the Lombards, in favor of Zotto, one of their chiefs ;

but as social progress is earlier in the south, so is it more fleeting, and in less than three centuries this duchy was dismembered.

Not one of these republics, however admirable they may be in some respects, however superior to the ancient states of Greece and Rome, by the better kind of happiness which existed in them, and by the more equal right of every man to the protection of the law, deserves to be held up as a model of government in the present times. Experience has shown that the same extent of territory, united into one empire, is more prosperous than when subdivided into little states. Wars, which are frequent rather in proportion to boundaries than to surface, are more rare ; and the central provinces which, when intersected, are exposed to perpetual hostility, are sheltered from attacks. Disputes are less personal, and, if not always less sanguinary, are less tainted with rage, perfidy, and individual animosity—with all the petty but destructive passions which accompany weakness. If an emulation of talent sometimes raises the intellectual standard in a community of small states, as has been asserted of ancient Greece, of Italy in the middle ages, and of modern Germany, other causes of rivalry spring from the same source, and involve mankind in fatal difficulties ; but the science of government is most particularly restricted by the subdivision of territory ; because the virtue and wisdom necessary to make men wise, and good, and free, and happy, follow in a much more rapid progression than the direct increase of numbers and territory. It may easily be shown, too, that it was not the rivalry of the other Greek republics which converted Athens into the emporium of mind, or mere emulation which made Tuscany the seat of modern art. The security, the duration of happiness and prosperity, are greater in extended empires ; and the nations which have occupied the brightest, as well as the longest page in modern history have not been small republics.

Notwithstanding all that has been said in favor of the Italian republics of the middle ages, by historians, it must seem to make liberty consist in disorder, it must be confessed, that the picture which they present is

much violence and treachery. The vice which most particularly characterises small states, which supplies the place of strength to narrow minds—cunning—was the most prominent feature of Italy. Conspiracies, assassinations, the stiletto, poison, were the daily resources of the patriotic, and the secret dagger the noblest weapon of defence. Neither was it the country only that was covered with the emblems of lawlessness: in every town ensigns of insecurity were unfurled; the houses of the great were converted into fortresses, surrounded by battlements, and flanked with towers, and every street became a field of battle. Domestic broils divided every city, and were the inheritance of every family. When internal force or artifices were not sufficient, foreign assistance was invoked, which either quelled or fomented discords as its own interest required, and every occurrence afforded an opportunity for new insurrections. Such a condition of political existence is too dear a price for liberty, if indeed such a condition is compatible with that which has justice and security for its foundation.

Little, then, of internal policy is to be learned from the middle ages of Italy, applicable to the great states of modern Europe. The democracy of Florence, which excluded the nobility from public offices, and took from them the protection of the law, making common report sufficient evidence to condemn them, could not, at this day, be admitted by the wildest demagogue. The aristocracy of Venice, with its permanent inquisitors of state, its secret delations, its secret trials, and its secret executions, deserves to be mentioned at this day for no purpose but to show that such an institution should be avoided. It is only as the commencements of reviving policy, and as the prelude to a better era than that of mythology, that these states command respect and admiration.

The Italian peninsula, in the middle ages, was a miniature of Europe in its present state. It was composed of numerous realms, whose international relations were extremely complicated. In the twelfth century, during the quarrels between the Italian cities and the emperor Frederick Barbarossa, the number of states which adhere

his cause was eight, while eighteen had confederated to oppose him; and these six-and-twenty states embraced only the north of Italy. Amid so populous a community of cities, a code was necessary to regulate the social intercourse, and the law of nations, like most other intellectual improvements, had its origin in the south, upon small dimensions, and an humble scale, and rose to larger growth in the dilatory north. From Italy, this code has spread over Germany, a much greater extent of territory, where it was improved by wider relations and stronger powers of reflection, and what in the former was confined to practice, in the latter was matured upon principles. In the country, where morality is more absolute, too, it was divested of one of the great vices which debased it in the regions of debility and luxury—perfidy; and though it assumed another appearance—force, sometimes ferocity—it was no longer sullied but by defects which social progress never fails to diminish.

The Germans, even in the time of Cæsar, had distinguished themselves by their attachment to liberty, and the most philosophic of historians records their freedom as their most eminent characteristic. Their liberty, however, seems to have consisted in personal independence, more than in the good regulations of the social compact. In every society where a sufficient portion of the former is not conceded, it may be affirmed that the latter is not mature: and such was the condition of the early Germans, the difficulties of whose natural situation prevented them from so soon adopting the most intellectual forms of government. The obstacles which they had to subdue, together with other particulars, have been described by Tacitus in such a manner, that his treatise was long considered as a fanciful satire upon the morals of his countrymen, contrasted with barbarians; but the evidence of later times has confirmed his accuracy, and the customs still to be found in the mountainous regions of Europe, and among the wild hordes of North America, establish his veracity.

Little alteration occurred in the manner of government till the time of Trajan, when it began to be improved by the influence of civilisation. W



not, however, know much of freedom, and to their first conquerors succeeded the dominion of the Franks, by whom the different states were still left separate, until Charlemagne united them into one kingdom. At the extinction of the German branch of the descendants of this mighty chief, one of the first privileges claimed by his subjects was, the right of choosing their own monarch; and Conrad, Count of Franconia, on the refusal of Otho Duke of Saxony, was seated on the imperial throne.

Although political wisdom had thus received many acquisitions which Italy could not confer upon it, it was not yet of the most elevated species; and in this as in some other branches of social improvement, the desire, rather than the active practice of good, is apparent. The Germans, as remarked before, stand too much in the inland regions of Europe to enjoy the benefits of extensive communications. Their martial spirit, their independence, their pride, make them impatient of despotism; but their moral powers, which have enabled them to resist it, and to speculate upon emancipation, have not completed the work, for, amid the systems which they have devised in behalf of freedom, an unwieldy machine of international relations is all they have been able to construct. While the people of the whole Germanic body have acquired but little of their rights, the princes of Bavaria, Brandenburg, Saxony, Hanover, Hesse, &c., imagined they were achieving mighty exploits, when preserving the independence of their petty dominions, and maintaining in the heart of Europe an overgrown monster of feodality, while the entire system was everywhere subverted. The prominent feature of the constitution was, the election of the chief, and this was regulated with all due ceremonies; but at the period when the electors had the greatest power, they preferred the empty right of voting in the election of their monarch, to the more noble privilege of owing homage to no superior.

Another proof of the want of political prudence was, the ascendancy which the clergy were allowed to assume, constitutionally, in the empire. Neither was this effected by the mere ambition of prelates, or the blind weakness of the

laity ; it was systematically brought about by the sovereigns, who afterwards became the principal sufferers. One of the best and wisest of the emperors, Otho, surnamed the Great, bestowed upon that body immense tracts of land, and while he sought to establish a counterpoise to the encroachments of the lay nobility, he raised up a power which soon became hostile to the throne itself, and took an active part in promoting the interests of the church against the state.

But the defects of this science cannot be better exemplified than by the lawless violence which was allowed to subsist, even to a very late period, throughout the country. Robbery was actually tolerated, and many of the nobility subsisted by plunder ; their mansions were built on unassailable heights, and near defiles, where travellers became an easy prey. When the Archbishop of Cologne erected a castle, the person whom he appointed governor, without a salary, ventured to inquire of his grace by what means he was to subsist, and received this answer, ‘ Do not four roads run near the fortress ? ’ Frederick I., at the end of the twelfth century, thought he had done much for the tranquillity of his subjects, when he enacted his *jus diffidationis*, declaring that all men who commenced hostilities, without giving three days’ notice, should be held as robbers, not as legitimate enemies ; and it was not till the end of the fifteenth century that his law was abrogated in the Diet of Worms.

Notwithstanding all this, however, Europe is much indebted to the German states for the political knowledge imparted by them. Much of the present international system is derived from them. The Hanseatic union, which was promoted by the laxity of German combination, contributed to extend through the west the commerce of which Italy had been the emporium. The same relaxed state of association, too, was favourable to the propagation of religious innovations, and to it may in part be referred the success of the Reformation. By a singular destiny, the imperfections of the German constitution were severely felt at home ; while to mankind at large they have proved the sources of many benefits. Thus, the sincerity, the guile-

lessness of the German character, so perceptible in the lesser concerns of life, manifest themselves still more extensively in the great relations of the social system.

The south of Germany is more under the rod of despotism than the provinces of the north, and the poorest regions of her Austrian dominions could not produce so sound a spirit of freedom as may be found in Saxony. The resistance of this nation to the arms of Charlemagne—their union with the Holy See during the struggles which took place between the Popes and the Emperors—their subsequent impatience of Romish impostures and usurpations, were consequences of the same spirit; and the north of Germany has contributed more toward the diffusion of religious and political freedom, than any other portion of that vast realm.

The defect of Italian, as well as of German policy, was, that public liberty was not combined with personal security, and one great end of good government was thus defeated. General prosperity was better attained than the safety of individuals, which, in fact, is the ultimate object of the social compact, and comes more near to the feelings of each man than any public concern. Domestic content is the element of which national happiness is composed, and, should it be wanting, the public welfare is incomplete. Italy lost by perfidy, Germany by violence, the repose which is indispensable to individual confidence and safety.

While these systems of external policy were thus establishing themselves, the western peninsula of the south was advancing by a different process to a condition which, in many respects, was superior to that which the east had adopted, and which strongly marks the different influences of their respective situations. Spain, as well as Italy, was overrun by invaders from the north; but her wealth and her power had not provoked the same animosity, or exposed her to similar repetitions of invasion, and the Goths who took possession of the territory, held it less as plunderers than as proprietors. Long conflicts between the old and the new occupiers ensued, and the empire of the Visigoths was marked with all the barbarism of the age; but although the Spanish nation

had not yet received its best lesson from adversity, it was already wiser and better than many of its contemporaries; and all the vices of all the Gothic kings of Spain would be surpassed by the single deeds of two Frankish queens, Fredegonde and Brunehault. The calamities which the Spaniards endured under the Moors, awakened their virtues, and matured their energies, and gave them an impatience of tyranny which few nations had felt at that epocha.

With a spirit of which there are but few examples, Pelagius, the glory of his country, erected his standard against the invading Moors, in the valley of Cangas. The mountain of Ansena saw a little army of one thousand Goths, whom three centuries had converted into Spaniards, assemble on its heights. From the caverns of N. S. de Cabadonga issued the pious warriors who had fled before the Koran, and the little hamlet of Gijon became the refuge of Christian Spain, and the seat of a new empire, which employed near eight centuries in recovering the territory of its forefathers.

In the contests which the descendants of these brave men sustained, every single individual was of the utmost utility, and all felt their own importance in the public mass. The result of this feeling was pride and liberty, not perhaps that wisest species of liberty which proceeds from the maturest combinations, but the indestructible impulse which is stronger than calculation. As the kingdoms of Oviedo, Navarre, Leon, Castile, Arragon, and Portugal were won back, the principal actors in the conquest claimed the right to govern what they had recovered, and the sovereigns were compelled to admit them to a share of power. This peninsula had for some centuries been separated from the rest of Europe, and the traces of its dependence upon the Roman empire had been obliterated by the more recent marks of Moorish subjection. The warfare, too, in which it was unremittingly engaged had necessitated the appointment of chiefs, and monarchies, not republics, were formed; but the many had as large a proportion of deliberative right in these kingdoms as in the Italian commonwealths; neither was their freedom really abridged, because the executive branch was confided to a single man, superior to the rest. ‘We,’ said the Barons of

Arragon, when they elected their chief, ‘ We, each one of  
‘ whom is as good as you, and who, united, are much bet-  
‘ ter, choose you for our king and lord, provided that you  
‘ observe our laws and privileges ; if not—not.’ And though  
this formula had in it more of boldness and of insubordina-  
tion, than of the calmness which co-ordinates a well-knit  
constitution, it shows, at least, a spirit untameable by the  
wiles or the arms of despotism.

The scattered members of Spain had been, in a great  
measure, collected together in the hands of Sanchéz the  
Great ; but this monarch, fearing, as some historians have  
asserted, the evils which might arise from the premature  
enjoyment of extensive power by his posterity, divided his  
inheritance into four separate bequests, which, however, in  
three years after his death became the permanent kingdoms  
of Navarre, Castile, and Arragon. This separation of his  
dominions, though not the primary cause of Spanish liberty,  
was a powerful assistance to it : for though the Spaniards  
might have enjoyed freedom when portioned out into petty  
states, they certainly could not have transferred the same  
mode of government to a more extensive empire. If this  
be the point of view in which Sanchéz considered the divi-  
sion of his property as expedient, his sagacity cannot be  
sufficiently admired ; but such an idea was not likely to  
occur to a sovereign, and particularly in those times.

The monarchy of Castile was elective and limited, and  
the sovereign was assisted and checked by national councils,  
whose interference was not optional on his part. These  
were composed at first of prelates and nobility, but in the  
year 1169, or, at the latest, in 1188, the commons formed a  
part of the Castilian cortes. This fact is a proof that the  
importance of the lower orders always increases when the  
great and opulent are compelled to demand their co-opera-  
tion. In ancient Rome this end was attained by the neces-  
sity of acquiring territory ; in modern Spain, by the neces-  
sity of recovering it ; in ancient Carthage and in modern  
Italy it was accomplished by trade.

The influence of the cortes was not only considerable—

it was well proportioned. One of their most essential rights was taxation, and the monarchs are frequently found making application to them for money. The cortes often resisted unjust demands with a prudence rarely to be met with, and as often granted, with the noblest generosity, what they thought necessary to their sovereign's wants and glory. Alphonso X. and his successors, Ferdinand IV., Alphonso XII., Henry III., John II. experienced their opposition, and neither Ferdinand and Isabella, nor even Charles I. himself, dared to violate this right. Yet the same body granted to Alphonso XI. so large a supply, that he accepted only of part, and when at the siege of Algesiras he sent his plate to be coined, the great towns of the realm tendered him a voluntary gift. Such was their profusion also to John I., that he thought himself bound to compensate it by remitting some burdens to which he had a right. Similar struggles of generosity occurred between other Spanish sovereigns and the cortes; and when Francis I. of France could not obtain money from his subjects to pay his ransom, the states assembled at Corunna granted Charles V. two hundred millions of maravedis. It is evident, then, that it was not parsimony, but a due sense of their rights and duties which prevented this assembly from squandering away the public resources. Neither was their concurrence a mere form. It was supported by the power of examining accounts, of inquiring into public expenditure; and they often compelled the administrators of the public revenues to specify the mode in which they had expended the sums allotted to particular uses. In 1390, the first year of the reign of Henry III., they refused to grant a new subsidy, deeming it both dishonorable and mischievous so to do until former supplies had been accounted for. In 1407 they made the queen and Ferdinand swear that the subsidy granted to carry on the war against Granada should not be otherwise employed; and the Spanish Tiberius himself, Philip II., was forced to listen to their undaunted remonstrances against his prodigality. The right of legislation, too, was in the hands of the cortes; and, from the end of the twelfth century, it was

shared by the commons. The laws of Alphonso the Wise were confirmed by the assent of all the orders at different intervals, and finally sanctioned, in 1348, in the celebrated session at Alcala. Some of the kings, indeed, attempted to dispense with their interference, although others had admitted that what was done by these assemblies could be undone by them alone. But the cortes never failed to remonstrate most effectually against every infringement until their entire subversion. The usual coronation oath obliged the kings to observe the laws enacted by the nation; and not many instances occurred of its having been violated without remonstrances from the legislators. The order of succession also, and the right of inheritance to the throne were within their jurisdiction.

Besides this great national assembly, which may, in some measure, be considered as representative, there was a smaller council, the council of Castile, whose business it was to advise the sovereign, and to watch over the observance of the laws. Although the nature of this body made it depend as well upon the king as upon the people, the spirit of its members made it a useful substitute while the sittings of the cortes were suspended.

The administration of justice was for a long time independent of the crown, and the citizens chose their own officers. In the thirteenth century, however, the kings began to appoint judges; but even then they were bound to select them in each city from among its own burgesses; and the royal alcaides formed a court of appeal, whose sentence the monarch could not reverse.

The kingdom of Arragon enjoyed a long range of maritime boundary, and thence derived much of its moral and physical value among the kingdoms of Spain. Its first constitution seems to have been an elective monarchy, the sovereign being named by the barons or *riccos-hombres*; and he could perform no function of royalty until he had taken the coronation oath. Many were the struggles between the monarchs and the nation in behalf of liberty; but, in 1283, Peter III. was compelled to grant a charter, entitled the General Privilege, containing a curious enume-



ration of the grievances which the subject endured; arbitrary tallages; insecurity of property; secret trials; sentences of the justiciary without the assent of the cortes; nomination of Jews to judicial offices; torture; bribery of judges, &c. Four years after this the Arragonese obtained from Alphonso III. the acknowledgment of a positive right to fly to arms whenever their liberties were infringed: and the union of Saragossa, established under his father, soon showed it was not an empty confederacy. In little more than half a century they had another occasion to exercise this right when, with Don Jayme, the king's brother at their head, they opposed the attempts of Peter IV. to settle his kingdom upon his daughter Constantia. But, although the nobles were defeated the following year, and the union itself dissolved, many good laws were enacted, and the justiciary, a responsible officer, intermediate between the crown and the people, was intrusted with their preservation.

The office of justiciary had been created long before this time, but his functions had not been so ample until the abolition of the privilege of union. Then, indeed, his power became much more extensive; and he may truly be held as the guardian of public as well as of private liberty. In legal difficulties the territorial judges were bound to apply to him. The king could not impede the execution of his sentence, but the justiciary could suspend the proceedings of all inferior courts. He possessed two most important privileges, which often proved the safeguard of the subject—1st, He protected all suitors who called upon his interference from the persecution of the judges appointed by the king; 2ndly, He could wrest any prisoner from the hands of the royal officers, and place him in his own particular prison until the moment of trial. And that these privileges were often exercised in fact, may be proved by innumerable instances. From the same period, too, the office of justiciary was held for life, and he was accountable ultimately to the states, not to the king.

The cortes of Arragon were composed of four orders:—prelates, ricos-hombres, infanzones, or inferior nobility. deputies from the royal towns. In this last



the various rights of taxation, legislation, &c., as in the cortes of Castile; and, in the intervals of their sittings, a permanent commission had powers to manage the public revenue, and to protect the justiciary in the exercise of his functions.

The other parts of the Spanish peninsula enjoyed considerable liberty; and Valencia and Catalonia, before their incorporation with other kingdoms, had their cortes. The Catalans, in particular, inhabiting a mountainous and sterile country, are strongly attached to their ancient privileges, and, with most of the northern Spaniards, are the proudest of their countrymen.

But, though the kingdoms of Castile and Arragon certainly owe some of their pride, and, consequently, of their liberty, to the difficulties which always accompany a mountainous soil, even though it may be in a southern latitude; yet the progress and decay of freedom in Spain prove that neither her pride nor her liberty was the result of natural difficulties only, but that the efforts employed to resist and to expel the Moors were the more efficient cause of both. The existence of constitutional rights and freedom is so entirely interwoven with the share which the people have in governing themselves, that the mere enumeration of the sittings of the representative body is sufficient, *cæteris paribus*, to measure the degree of freedom which a nation enjoys.

The early formation of corporations, and the admission of deputies from the towns at so remote a period as the middle or the end of the twelfth century, showed an extraordinary disposition in the Spanish people to take an active part in their own affairs. The other nations of Europe were at that period in a different condition; for, with a few exceptions, the commons had no share in the government. Even the Italian republics did not possess so well poised a representation as the Spanish kingdoms; for, as no third power existed in any of them, hardly one could be mentioned in which the aristocratic or the democratic ascendancy, if not in a state of dangerous contention, was not tyrannically paramount. But, in Spain, the two orders were too firmly

united by necessity not to adhere together, and the immediate, the practical bond of union which their prudence suggested to them was a king.

The mode of assembling the cortes does not seem to have been uniform at all periods, and this was a defect. But the worst prognostic was, that, from the year 1315 successively, the portion of the commons called upon to take a part in the legislature progressively diminished. There is every reason to suppose that no one corporation or *consejo* was originally excluded from the right of sending representatives to the cortes; yet, in those assembled at Burgos in the year above mentioned, only ninety towns are stated to have commissioned deputies, whose number was one hundred and ninety-two. Now, it is hardly probable that this was equal to the original number of the deputations in the entire kingdom of Castile; and thus two centuries had effected a diminution of anxiety about public rights. This conjecture is the more plausible as, in the interval, the battle of Tolosa was won by the combined armies and sovereigns of Castile, Arragon, and Navarre, and the no less important victory of Tariffa by the Alphonsos of Castile and Portugal. The cortes assembled at Madrid in 1391 contained but one hundred and twenty-six deputies, furnished but by fifty towns; and, previously to this, the kingdom of Leon had been omitted. The meetings of this body afterwards became more and more irregular, until, in the sixteenth century, John II., and his imbecile son, Henry IV., not daring to meet a full assembly of the nation, convened only such deputations as they could depend upon. In 1480, immediately after both kingdoms were united, the privilege of representation was held by no more than seventeen cities, though a few were added to the list as new districts fell within the domination of Castile. The cortes of Castile, indeed, in 1506 and 1507, most meanly and falsely declared that, from usage immemorial, eighteen cities, and no more, had the right of sending deputies to the estates. But the conquest of Granada had preceded this declaration by nearly twenty years; and the authority of Ferdinand and Isabella had grown by the victories and the security which the people

had won. The abuses arising from the carelessness of the nation became still more outrageous under Philip I., and his memorable son Charles V., who openly dispensed with the interference of his subjects; and were at their height under the third prince of the house of Austria, Philip II. To a petition presented by the cortes in 1558, requiring that, according to ancient right, the laws enacted by them should be repealed no where else, this sovereign replied that he would do what best suited the government. How fallen from the antique spirit of their fathers were the Spaniards of an age which should have taught them truer wisdom! The resource of unavailing remonstrance, indeed, still was open to them, and their last voice was heard just two years before the death of that very monarch by whom the remains of the Moors were expelled from every part of his dominions, and ten years after the day when the last vestige of Mahometan grandeur had been effaced by Philip III. From that time the liberties of Spain have slumbered, and her pride has consisted in recollections. Natural circumstances have prevailed when fictitious difficulties ceased to falsify their ascendancy; and despotism, mixed with more vanity than the nation ever knew before, has triumphed. It is not as having carried off the wealth, arts, and industry of Spain that the expulsion of the Moors has injured the peninsula; but as having removed from its provinces an active rival, who awakened all its energies, and kept its people vigilant and proud.

Since the reign of Philip III., the period whence the decline of the Spanish monarchy became evident, the nation has twice been roused by the presence of invaders. The first of these irruptions, indeed, was caused by the pretensions of two sovereigns, neither of whom was born a Spaniard, and whose claims to the throne were not directly interesting to the native feelings of the country. Nevertheless, the people showed a part, but not all of their former spirit and devotedness, and the battles of Almanza, Saragossa, Almenara, Villaviciosa, were nobly disputed. When a century had naturalised the dynasty which force and intrigue had established, an ephemeral usurper, whose ambi-

tion would have spread his family over Europe, stole away the royal race from the palace of their ancestors, and took from the nation all that custom had made tolerable, and almost dear. The treachery of the deed was foreign to the character even of the fallen Spaniard. The cruelties which marked the passage of the French had been unknown till they appeared. The massacre of Madrid resounded through the nation : every city became a camp, every cottage was a tent, and every man a hero. The sons and fathers, the wives and daughters of the butchered flew to arms ; and undisciplined except by indignation, having no leaders but such as patriotic sympathy placed at their head, without swords in their armories or cannons in their arsenals, but with bosoms warmed by the justest fury, they fought the well arrayed armies which had triumphed in almost all the capitals of Europe. The expulsion of the Moors was the work of time,—long and deliberate. The conquest of the French by the Spanish patriots was rapid, because every feeling was roused, and pride rose high in every breast. But this was a war for independence, not for liberty. The former the Spanish nation can support : to the latter they have long been strangers. Their energies inspire them to resist oppression ; but their wisdom has not taught them how to organise the social compact of true freedom.

In the best days of Spanish liberty, even when they who were the most interested in the welfare of the state, had the largest and the most constant share in guiding its concerns, three defects diminished the value of the Castilian constitution. These were, 1st, No adequate representation of property of the landed interest seems to have had a place among the commons. 2ndly, The two orders, nobles and commons, formed one single deliberating body, and their weight was not kept distinct as counterpoises to each other. 3rdly, Trial by jury was not in use. It is true, indeed, that some institutions, in most of the states of the peninsula, in some degree compensated for these defects. Thus the mode of appointing municipal judges, the court of the royal *alcaldes* in Castile, and still better the *justiza* of Arragon,

made some amends for the want of juries and of habeas corpus. Notions of property, too, were not so precise, or its value as a stake and pledge to society was not so well known in those ages as at present; and it remained for the most commercial, as well as the proudest nation of the world, to learn that last and most essential principle of political freedom, that the surest guarantee which human frailty can give for good conduct is property.

Almost all the south of Europe has been peopled by the north; and the generations which issued from the high latitudes of Sarmatia, now fill not only Britain, but Gaul, Italy, and Spain. Many laws, customs, and manners of the nations which spread over these countries were the same; and points of similarity in the institutions and habits of their descendants may be traced to their common origin; but the differences must be referred to later causes. The face of the country from which the settlers issued was too similar throughout; the natural difficulties in which they had lived were too little diversified to produce such varied characters as distinguish the Spaniards and the Italians; and to enable them to make greater or smaller approaches to solid and well ordered freedom. The same must be said of the nations that settled in France and Britain, to whom, as they had lived in similar situations, many features of mind were once common, though their governments have long since ceased to be alike.

The territory of France most easily admits of extension and union into one great whole. Bounded on the west by the ocean, and intersected by no very large chain of mountains, it is almost indefinitely open to aggrandisement on the east, from the great variety of limits which successively present themselves, and no one of which is much more positively marked than another. Consequently, the union of this tract of land into one empire was easily accomplished, and an immense territory was collected under the single power of Charlemagne, while the islands of the British realm were still divided into little states. A similar union, though not to the same extent, had indeed taken place there

five times before the accession of Pepin ; for natural circumstances had suggested a result which was forbidden to the early Greeks.

But the political wisdom of the French was incomplete, and was not accompanied by all the requisites which the welfare and happiness of states demand. After Charlemagne, frequent divisions of territory took place ; and even when the kingdom became nominally one, the number of the principalities, half submissive, half independent, which it contained were excessive. The immediate cause of many misfortunes was the extent of country held by men who, in the spirit of the monarchy, were, to all intents and purposes, subjects, but whose possessions made them too powerful for implicit obedience.

The Franks possessed that kind of liberty which belongs to barbarians—personal, solitary, individual independence ; but the union, the combination, which multiply the faculties of human creatures much more than in an arithmetical ratio, they knew not. Neither did the character ascribed to them by antient writers give much hope of seeing good government established. Beside the testimony of Cæsar, we have the authority of Libanius, who descants largely on the restlessness of their disposition. Procopius also says, that, of all nations, they were the most faithless to their engagements. Salvian thus describes the men who were actively promoting the fall of Rome. The Goths, says he, are deceitful ; the Saxons hardy and chaste ; the Gepidæ void of humanity ; the Huns cunning and dissolute ; the Germans drunkards ; the Alani greedy of booty ; the Franks liars, but obliging to strangers—cunning and perfidious to such a degree, that false oaths passed among them as mere figures of rhetoric. To these may be added Vopiscus, who asserts that it was common among them to violate their faith with a smile. It is not likely that a nation which brought such qualities as those just mentioned into a country like France, should then correct the vices of vanity. The only persons who contradict these charges, and bear evidence in their favor, are themselves ; and, in a public record, the preface to the Salic law, they represent themselves as a far-

famed nation, founded by God himself; brave in arms; faithful to their treaties; profound in council; noble and robust of stature; renowned for form and beauty; daring, fleet, and hardy. The writer, indeed, who continued Procopius, Agathias, represents them as not quite so bad; but the very terms which he uses show that the general opinion did not coincide with his. Even the eulogy passed upon them in the twelfth century by William of Malmesbury, does not efface the accusation of perfidy, cunning, and untruth; for a nation may very well unite these qualities with courtesy of manner and intellectual activity.

The situation of the Franks under Clovis, and of the Spaniards under Pelagio, were complete contrasts. The former were innumerable conquerors, spread over a vast tract of territory; the latter were a conquered nation, pressed up into the narrowest limits by an enemy, whom it became indispensable to repel. The value of the people, then, was less among the former, as they had nothing to do but to sit down quietly in their new possessions. But, as national councils were congenial to the spirit and practice of northern nations, deliberative assemblies were convened under the Frankish kings. The second race continued the custom, and the mighty Charlemagne enacted laws with the co-operation of his nobility. But the people had but a small share in the legislation, and the allodial lords alone preserved this privilege. In little more than half a century after the death of Charlemagne these assemblies ceased; and, though a congress was occasionally held for some particular purpose, regular meetings were not deemed essential. Even the monarchs of the third race, unlike the Norman kings of England, had no advisers or controllers, except a council formed of their own household and of inferior vassals. The power of these sovereigns, too, was extreme; and Gregory of Tours addressed Chilperic as accountable for his rule to the divinity alone. At times, indeed, royal authority varied according to the disposition of the occupant; but the nation acquired no guarantee of its liberties or duties—nor did the French barons demand the right of being regularly summoned. Arbitrary authority was generally exercised by the



chiefs of the kingdom within their own dominions; and a similar sway was wielded by the sovereign possessors of large provinces, which were integrant parts of the realm. The fierce and insolent independence of these powerful subjects displays a melancholy want of knowledge in the rudiments of social order. But, indeed, the whole feudal system was suited to a people more eager for conquest than disposed to freedom; more anxious to cherish martial ferocity than public order, and in whom the spirit of insubordination would yield but to the arm of superiors, immediately succeeding each other in regular gradation. According to Mably, France was, in the beginning, a vast camp, containing the elements of political union, but unripe for entering into due combination.

The first attempt to change this system for something better, was made by Louis VI., surnamed le Gros. The scenes of violence which disgraced the kingdom made reform indispensable, even for the existence of royal authority. The right of private warfare had been exercised to such an extent, that the nobles themselves were exhausted, and the people knew no safety. Louis, justly conceiving that the best method to procure repose would be to strengthen the weak and to enfeeble the strong, instituted civil corporations, which, uniting the commons, enabled them to oppose the nobles. But this was done rather for the purpose of defence against robbery, than for the admission of the people into any thing like a share in the legislature. The burgesses, indeed, obtained the privilege of a municipal administration in their respective cities, and of electing their own officers, their mayors, and aldermen; but they did not yet enter into the councils of the king and of the nation.

Another important act of Louis le Gros was the establishment of royal judges, to whom appeals were open from the division of the seigneurial courts. The ultimate distribution of justice, thus taken from the great vassals of the crown and vested in hands which could arrest the execution of their decisions, was a severe blow to their authority, and a prodigious increase to the royal prerogative. The lower orders, feeling the immediate oppression of their lords, but



not provident enough to see that the head of the realm must finally absorb all power, readily went over to the party of their protector, and thus laid the foundation of their own enthrallment.

The reduction of the great feudatories was a favorite object with all the sovereigns who followed ; but the nation gained little by their humiliation. Until Philip the August annexed the provinces of Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Touraine, and Poitou to his dominions, the kings of France had vassals as powerful as themselves. But these and other accessions of territory made this monarch formidable to his subjects ; and the regal power rose higher in his hands, and rested upon a surer foundation than it had ever done before. The wealth which he had amassed enabled him to defray the expenses of a permanent army ; and he possessed all the artifices indispensable to a prince who would make himself arbitrary.

Louis VIII. had all the military spirit of his father, and was little disposed to give up any of his prerogatives ; but he proceeded with caution and address. His son, one of the most remarkable of French princes, began his reign amid factions, which taught the nobles the hope of recovering their former lawless independence. But the prudence and resolution of his mother Blanche defeated the intrigues of the Counts of Champagne, Brittany, la Marche, and others, and maintained the tranquillity of the kingdom, until St. Louis could himself assume the reins of government. This monarch was not of a disposition to have begun the work of increasing the power of the crown at the expense of the vassal lords ; but he was equal to the task of continuing it. The very qualities which, at first, might have been prejudicial—his moderation, his probity, his piety, assisted the prosecution of the plan, by disarming the jealousy of the nobles, and entirely gaining the confidence of the people ; for, while the one looked upon him as their best protector, the others beheld in him an upright judge, and an impartial legislator.

This pious but Quixotic prince, before his departure for Tunis, promulgated his *Etablissement*, or code of laws.

particularly levelled against the vices of the times, and remarkable for a severity, which now appears disproportioned to his general humanity. The pain of death was almost as familiar as in the laws of Draco; and even the man who attempted to break from prison was condemned to capital punishment, though guiltless of the crime for which he was originally incarcerated. Nevertheless, he prescribed the acquittal of the accused whenever there was the least doubt in their favor, saying, '*Droit est toujours plus pres d'absoudre que de condamner.*' He encouraged, however, the fury of the Inquisition, and signed the death-warrant of one hundred and eighty dissenters in Champagne. Thus, while he withdrew all monks, clerks, and crusaders from laical jurisdiction, he handed over the laity to the rod of clerical intolerance.

One of his best ordinances was the substitution of evidence in the place of judicial combats; but he did not compel his nobles to imitate this wise act. The measure was the more effective, as it was accompanied by a right of amending judgment, or of appeal from the seigneurial to the royal courts. St. Louis, says Mably, adroitly condemned appellants to pay a fine to their first judges, in case their appeal were rejected; and the hope of compensation induced the lords to acquiesce in the regulation. The money thus wrung from their vassals made some amends, too, for the right of waging private warfare, annulled by this monarch; and which, till his time, had tolerated as rude and plentiful exactions in France as in any part of Europe. The independence of the great vassals was further abridged by annulling the right of coining, then shared at least by eighty of them, and giving currency to the king's money throughout the subject states; and their power received its most fatal blow from an ordinance, which separated for ever from the original fiefs all portions which should at any time be detached from them as the dowries of younger children and females. The establishment of a celebrated college by Robert de Sorbonne, confessor to Louis IX., contributed to enlighten the people, to the imminent detriment of a very ignorant nobility.

The injury inflicted upon rude violence by the diffusion of knowledge among the commons became manifest in the succeeding reign ; and Philip the Bold, taking the judicial power out of the hands of those who formerly administered it, confided it to inferior persons. The admission of witnesses and legal processes required more study than the ceremonies of the lists ; and the nobles, who, on former occasions, had been forced to yield their ascendancy to the better-informed clergy, gave up their seats in courts of justice to a lower order of men, more skilled in the wiles of jurisprudence. The entire order, indeed, and the very institution itself, received a further humiliation by the elevation of a ruptuary (roturier), Raoul, a goldsmith, to the honors of nobility.

But the sovereign who gave the most destructive blow to the feudal system in France was Philip IV., or the Fair. Engaged in quarrels with Pope Boniface VIII., in which the independence of the nation, no less than his own dignity was concerned, and embarrassed by pecuniary difficulties, he ventured upon assembling the States-General ; and, what may appear extraordinary in a man who aimed at absolute power, he invited the several towns and corporations to send deputies of their own election. Neither was this invitation addressed to the cities included within the royal dememes only ; it was extended to the vassal provinces. But the sole obstacle to the views of this monarch was the nobility ; and when, by turning a portion of their authority, not into his own scale, but into that of the commons, he seemed to be bent on nothing but the emancipation of the people, he was insidiously promoting the interests of despotism. The admission of the vassals of vassals into the councils of the sovereign was an infringement of the most essential principle of feodality.

Had the commons of France been in any measure fit for liberty, this change would have given ample scope to the development of such a disposition. But the subsequent history of the States-General manifests an opposite tendency, and shows a people incapable of bearing any social discipline whenever the severest rod of arbitrary power is not wielded by the strongest arm.

From the year 615 to the year 1230, about thirty-five assemblies of the national council had been held ; and, with the exception of about three—those which met under Louis I., the Debonnaire—they were not remarkable for violence or injustice, but were generally as peaceable and as wise as any debating bodies could be expected to be in such an early age. In them it was that, in 634, Dagobert named Clovis his successor ; that, in 757, regulations were made concerning marriages, lepers, &c. ; that, in 772, Charlemagne took measures against the Saxons, and regulated the liberties of the church ; that, in 805, he published his last will and testament ; that, in the space of three years, Louis I. was three times deposed, and three times reinstated ; that, in 847, a regulation was passed concerning the right of succession ; and that dissensions between the sovereigns and the vassals were happily adjusted. But to these assemblies none but the nobles and the clergy were admitted, and the people—that portion of the nation in which the national character most emphatically resides—was utterly excluded.

But these scenes of comparative tranquillity changed when the commons began to mingle their minds in the national councils. In 1312, ten years after their establishment, they were again convened, and Philip IV. made use of them to condemn the Knights Templars to the flames. The fifth convocation was in 1355, and in this some feeling of the necessity of a regular administration manifested itself. But this feeling was only the more deplorable, as it was accompanied by an utter incapacity to effect any good. The ostensible object of these States was to grant a subsidy and levies, to oppose the attacks of the English. King John, in return, bound himself to many obligations ; and, among others, not to apply the grants of money to any object but that to which they were intended ; not to raise arbitrary taxes ; not to take from the people corn, wine, victuals, carts, horses, &c., and finally he promised to redress many grievances. In case the king should break his faith, the persons intrusted with the decisions of the States were bound by oath to disobey ; but no means of resistance were given to them, nor would it have been possible, in

such a government, to furnish any. The assembly, too, enacted that if, in the following meeting of the States-General, the necessary subsidies were not granted, the king should resume the powers which he had given up, with the single exception of prisage. In short, nothing could equal the practical imbecility of all these regulations, and they speedily fell into disuse.

The meeting of the following year did not display the disposition which suited the exigency of the times. The country required immediate assistance, and the deputies clamoured about abuses and reforms. Certainly there was ample room for complaint; but the nation which, in the moment of public danger and most urgent distress, can spend its energies upon internal turmoils, is selfish, not patriotic, and has little reason to hope for liberty. The hour of public need was that in which the Romans were united; and, in the midst of ease and safety, they divided on their domestic interests. The French, indifferent to their liberties when taken up by their enjoyments, could talk of oppressions only when their king was captive in a foreign land. The consequence of this meeting of the States-General was desolation, anarchy, and blood; the Jacquerie; the companies organised into regular banditti; massacres; the insurrection of Le Coq and Marcel; the money destined for the ransom of the king seized by the factious; and the dauphin literally covered with the blood of two faithful marshals, murdered before his eyes. It would be difficult to say whether the nobles or the people were the most depraved on this occasion; but the former were, moreover, foolish enough to refuse to sit with the lower orders, and thus, out of silly arrogance, abandoned the field of battle to their adversaries.

The three next meetings of the States were tolerably peaceable, but that which took place in 1380 was the cause of new disorders and bloodshed. The sceptre was in the hands of a minor, whose uncles were disputing for the regency, and had overturned the order of the realm. New clamours were raised about lost liberties and privileges; but every effort to redress grievances terminated as it had begun in

speculation crowned by endless calamities, and in a very short time brought on the perpetration of innumerable cruelties.

In 1413, a popular assembly, not indeed, strictly speaking, the States-General, was followed by still greater crimes and disorders—by the Cabochian ordinances, and the rule of a sovereign butcher—by the long and bloody contests of the Armagnacs and the Bourguignons, who, during forty years, continued their massacres and their perfidies. It was at this moment that the people had gained the most complete ascendancy which they ever had attained in France, and had they possessed the necessary virtue and wisdom, they might have used it to their own advantage. If liberty had been their end and aim, there was no opposition on the part of government which could have prevented its establishment, and the popular will was uncontrolled.

The States-General which met after this period were mostly inefficient, and produced none of the benefits generally expected from the interference of the people. Under Charles VIII., the greatest hopes were raised by the assembly of 1482, who, too numerous to debate in one body, resolved themselves into the very worst mode of division which could be imagined—not into chambers representing the different orders of society, but into six nations. They made a parade of justice, order, good government—they restored the memories of some illustrious victims who had perished by the cruelty of Louis XI., and then separated abruptly. They were, perhaps, the wisest and the best that ever had been collected, and projected many good things, which, however, remained without effect. A certain portion of instruction may teach the heads of a nation to talk and descant speciously, but the execution of their plans depends upon the million. Hence many a council may propose and reason ably, while the multitude are not in a condition to benefit by their logic or their eloquence.

Under Louis XII. the States assembled to annul a treaty of marriage which he had made between his daughter and Charles of Luxembourg. They helped him to break his royal word, and then called him the father of his people, and

were dismissed. In 1558, Henry II. admitted the chiefs of the magistracy into the assembly, and thus added a fourth order, named *Etat de la Justice*, which, however, did not much diminish their embarrassments. Three years after this, the States met again, talked and disputed more than ever, and concluded by declaring their incompetence to grant taxes. The States of Blois, in 1576, proposed that the right of veto should be taken from the king, and vested in a commission ; and those which met at the same place eight years afterwards, made, says De Thou, a pompous display of oratory. They were factious and inefficient ; and it was during one or other of these sessions that Henry III. declared himself the head of a faction, proscribed about one quarter of his subjects, and was privy to the murder of the Guises. Finally, the States met, for the last time, in 1614 ; and the account given of them by Necker shows that they were much more taken up with arranging the etiquette of their sittings, and with the number of bows which were becoming upon different occasions, than with the good of the nation.

The importance of the labors of the French States-General, and of the various Cortes of Spain, was very different. The latter really had a large share in controlling the will of the monarch ; and it was only after seven hundred years of uninterrupted experience, that a diminution of their activity is perceptible. Then, indeed, a relaxation from anxiety brought on a listlessness toward public concerns, and the interference of the nobles and the people became less effective and less frequent. But at no time were the French in the active enjoyment of such privileges. The States assembled only when the sovereign pleased to call them together, as it were to make them believe that he valued their interference ; but they never were able to stop his proceedings ; and the most they could do was to present the sad and oft-told ditty of their '*doleance*,' to which the king paid not the least attention. In the best of days, their influence is hardly to be reckoned in the balance of the kingdom. They usually left things worse than they found them ; and whenever some glimmering of wisdom did appear in their councils, there was not virtue, energy, or union.



to carry their projects into effect. More commonly, indeed, they served as an opportunity for tumult and revolt; and to them may be traced the large effusion of blood which has stained the history of France more deeply than that of any country so Christian and so civilised. But what is worse, these disorders began as soon as the commons were admitted to a part in the legislature, and were always in exact proportion to the share which they, who truly represent the nation, bore in its concerns.

It cannot be deduced, then, from the preponderance which the French people assumed while they did exercise the privilege of assembling to debate and counsel, that their propensity to liberty was great. But the same conclusion will be more clearly evinced from a consideration already applied as a criterion of the tendency of the Spanish nation to freedom at different periods; the more or less frequent convocation of the national assemblies to deliberate. In the six centuries which preceded the introduction of the commons, these assemblies had met thirty-five times, at very unequal intervals, it is true; but leaving an average interruption of twenty years. The States-General first met at the beginning of the fourteenth century; and, during it, they assembled thirteen times; during the fifteenth century they met five times; during the sixteenth, six times; during the seventeenth, once. From the year 1614 to 1788, when a total revolution called together a new assembly, the commons never pretended to meddle with their own concerns. A regular decrease of popular interference, which had run through five centuries, terminated in an interval of 174 years, during which the nation never once inquired into abuses, but gave itself up to dissipation, levity, and immorality. To the oppressions and despotism of Louis XIV.; to the ostentation and profligacy of his successor, France patiently submitted; and not until the benevolent reign of Louis XVI., broke out into a revolution, which, for every species of vice, never had its equal; and which turned the nation further astray from the end ostensibly proposed, than an age of regular despotism could have done. This event came in the eighteenth century, to crown the evidence of preceding ages, that liberty is not the growth of the



French soil. Happy is it when men, incapable of freedom, meet with the hand that is strong enough to rule them, and are wise enough to submit to its direction !

The disposition to a free constitution had not increased in France along with the other branches of social improvement. The arts had flourished ; science had been encouraged ; literature had been favored with royal protection ; and even philosophy had dared to show itself, the unexpected appanage of a despotic crown. But it was not the pure love of these noble pursuits which fostered their improvements ; it was glory ; active and ambitious minds, eager to signalize themselves in any career, and equally gratified by brilliant error as by truth. The progress of vain men cannot, even in the realms of thought, be civilisation : it must be enjoyment, luxury even in intellect, and the domain of liberty lies neglected in the midst of splendid cultivation. What a melancholy prognostic for French liberty must that record ever remain, which shows that the interval between the meetings of the national councils, already twenty times too long in the preceding ages, had become nine times longer when the lapse of four centuries had accumulated their experience on the heads of the nation !

The parliaments of France were always of a different constitution from the States-General ; and were instituted for a different purpose. They were courts of justice, and did not represent any portion of the nation, being deputed by none. They were altogether at the disposal of the monarch, and cannot be considered as national councils. During the long chasms when the States had discontinued to meet, the parliament of Paris ventured to make remonstrances when they thought the king was mistaken. But their importance and integrity may be learned from the following facts. Louis XIV. forbade them to deliberate on matters of state or finances ; to proceed against the ministers of his choice ; to visit the great, or to receive presents for the administration of justice. The same monarch being informed, while hunting at Vincennes, that they were at that moment holding a refractory meeting, suddenly appeared among them, and, with his horsewhip in his hand, forbade their proceeding.

The influence of this body had nearly the same fate, and followed the same progress as that of the States-General; for, in the early ages of its institution, it was thought useful; but, in later days, it was frequently cashiered and exiled. Upon the whole, however, it was productive of less evil than the latter assembly, because the people had no representative there. The parliament, indeed, with all its imperfections, seems to have been the just measure of the liberty which the French nation is capable of enjoying. It was a tolerated emblem of many things which free nations really possess; and properly wielded, it had the effect of making the multitude suppose they had the right and the power to remonstrate. The only men who knew any thing of the laws and institutions of the country belonged to it; and their learning, which opened its benches for men of inferior birth, to the final exclusion of the highest orders, still kept alive the animosity to which the ignorance of the feudal nobility had first given rise.

After what has been said upon the States-General and the parliaments of France, and upon the disposition of the nation at large, it would be useless to look for imperfections in the state of public justice. Here were no municipal judges, chosen in each town by its own burgesses, and from among themselves; no royal alcaides; no justiza. The judicial power was as completely in the hands of the monarch as the executive; and the public had no forum whence they dared to declaim against injustice.

The sum total of these investigations is that, in proportion as southern nations have improved; as Europe has received most plentiful additions of knowledge; as wealth, happiness, wisdom have been reflected back from a new continent to the world which spread them there; as philosophy has unrolled the functions of the human mind; as physics has armed the hand of man with new powers; as chemistry has torn asunder the component parts of those substances which ignorance called elements; as the engines of astronomy have drawn down the heavenly bodies from their orbits, to lay them in the hand of man; as the whole state of the world has been progressive, the nations essentially vain, or deriving

their pride from casual, not from inherent circumstances, have lost the privileges which they once enjoyed. Spain and France are not the only countries of which this truth may be spoken. The Athenians lost their democracy in the time of their greatest splendor; the Lacedæmonians saw their factitious pride and their freedom fall together. In Rome both decayed when licentious conquests had placed her national existence on too secure a footing; and the destiny of all these realms was, that prosperity, peace, and splendor were not to coexist with liberty.

Since the world first began, one single nation has been so fortunate as to enjoy all these benefits, and to know that everything which constitutes human greatness is so incorporated with her liberties, as to be parts of one whole. That nation is England, who stands alone among empires to solve the great problem of uniting, at the same period, domestic and foreign prosperity, pride, virtue, wisdom, liberty, with all that can make them as lasting as the doom of earthly concerns can promise.

The British empire, removed from the sources of antient civilisation, and retarded by early disadvantages, was at first inferior to the continent in many points of social improvement; but as the progress of mankind became more general, and as the northern regions were brought within the pale of culture, most ample amends have been made for delay, by the advantages which later ages have secured.

To unite the entire territory of this empire in its present form was the work of successive operations, which employed many centuries. The union of the Saxon heptarchy under Egbert may be considered as the first step to this end, and since this time that portion of Britain has not been dismembered. The districts which compose it were not prevented by any geographical impediments from being united, and their formation into one system followed the mere development of social tendency.

The addition of Wales was not so easy, and to reduce a mountainous region under the same sceptre as the plain, supposes a more advanced condition of the political sciences. Consequently, four centuries and a half of experience were

necessary to bring this to a conclusion ; but from that moment the union was complete. In the best system of political relations, Wales could not be left a mere appendage to the crown of England, but must become a component portion of the realm, and such was the nature of the connexion immediately formed by one single operation as soon as all things were ripe for the purpose.

The situation of Scotland was different. So long an extent in latitude, as from the southernmost to the northernmost point of Great Britain, had produced a diversity of climate ; and antient broils, the inheritance of former times, had kept alive the animosities which so frequently disgrace the histories of bordering states. It was the interest also of a very active enemy of England, not to allow those hostile feelings to subside, and the union of the two portions of the island was delayed by the policy of France. Civilisation, too, was more slow in making its way in Scotland than in England ; and the example of the French had given vices to the former, before the difficulties of its natural position had permitted the due development of reason ; but the advancement of the political sciences, aided by the fortunate circumstance, that the right to both the crowns was vested in the same person, surmounted all impediments, and the south and the north at length formed one kingdom under James I. and VI., nearly eight centuries later than the union of the Saxon heptarchy.

The annexation of Ireland presented greater difficulties, and was the work of more time. Though possessed more than a century before Wales had been subdued, that island was not held upon any sure or satisfactory tenure. Its unimproved condition rendered its occupation easy, but also made it inaccessible to British cultivation ; while the natural advantages of its soil disposed the natives to be vain, and a difference of character kept asunder the minds and interests of the men of both islands : but the most efficient cause of this disunion was the boundary which separated them, for though the ocean, when human industry has learned to stem its rage, most effectually joins the remotest shores, it is the most disastrous barrier which can be opposed to uniting pro-

vinces into one empire. This great natural difficulty impeded the effects which the political wisdom of England would otherwise have accomplished at an early period, and it still injures the arrangements which sound policy would dictate between the component parts of the empire.

The free inhabitants of Britain were divided into two classes—the immediate and allodial possessors of land, and the cultivators. It was in the small divisions of society, as the tithings, hundreds, and counties, that the influence of these separate classes was immediately felt, and though similar distributions may not have been known to England only, they were not of equal importance in any other country, and speedily fell into disuse everywhere else. It was in these that justice was administered, and that the liberties of all classes were secured by the independence of the persons who composed them. Here it was, too, that measures of local defence were discussed, together with everything which regarded the administration of the district. The tithings exercised their functions within their own territory, subject, however, to the control of the larger assemblies of the hundreds, who, in their turn, were superseded by the county courts, the most efficient of all toward the maintenance of civil rights, the investigation of disputed claims, the punishment of crimes, and the general administration of justice; but the noblest institution of all was the trial of every man by twelve of his equals, almost selected by himself—an institution which is the more remarkable, if not originating in that country, but derived from German ancestry, for having been preserved there, while in all the rest of Europe it became obsolete. The trial by jury is one of those exquisite conceptions which ignorance would imagine on account of its simplicity, and which the most complicated refinements of wisdom would extol for its perfection.

At the head of all these assemblies stood the great national council, composed of the noble and wise men of the realm—the Wittenagemote. To this body no man, however high his birth, could belong, unless he possessed five thousand acres of land; and it is impossible not to recognise in this necessary qualification, the spirit of wisdom which

preferred property, as a surer stake than birth, for human integrity, and which has characterised the later legislation of England. This assembly expressed the will of the great, at least, and controlled the ambition of the monarch. Its consent was necessary for the enactment of laws, and when dispensed with by force or artifice for a time, it has not unfrequently annulled the proceedings in which it had no part. The sovereigns also often shared the dispositions of the people : for, though more active warriors have led the armies of the western empire, than Alfred, Athelstane, or Edward, not one among them ever enacted such a salutary law as that which gave the title of thane to any merchant who had made three long voyages, or to a ceorle who could purchase five hides of land. It was not till three centuries and a half had elapsed, that a French monarch dared, in one frivolous instance, to infringe the prejudice of birth, by raising his goldsmith to the order of nobility.

The resemblance which once existed between the Saxons in England and the Franks in Gaul grew every day less. Conquest, under whatever circumstances, is not a promoter of freedom ; and though many writers have endeavoured to show that, from the state of things introduced by the Normans, a great portion of British liberty is derived, it is not easy to perceive any other result than subjection, or to ascribe the liberties of this nation to any cause but the character of the people, formed by natural circumstances. So unpropitious, indeed, does the presence of William appear to have been\*, so much in opposition to the tendency of the national mind, that it may rather be questioned whether any other men could have lifted up their heads under the weight of oppression which he threw upon the country.

\* The bitter complaints which have been made against the oppressive measures of the two first of the Norman kings have induced a belief, that the condition of England in those times was worse than that of the continent ; but William did no more than apply to his new acquisition some of the laws which were usual in his patrimonial estates, which were there borne with silent submission, but against which the English spirit raised a generous outcry. Notwithstanding this clamour, however, it was still better to be a Briton than a Norman ; neither would William have dared to deal as hardly with his new as with his old dominions, or to introduce into the former one-half of the tyranny which, in the latter, was supported without a murmur.

Innumerable circumstances had modified the feudal system in England\*, and none more than the advantage which the allodial proprietors found in holding their estates by feudal tenures, as vassals of the sovereign; but as this act was voluntary, they retained many of their rights, and much of their influence, and the king did not find it expedient to enforce their further obedience. Great and numberless as were the oppressions of William, still there were limits which he dared not pass, and even much

\* These facts are thus commented upon by De Lolme. The feudal system prevailed throughout Europe; but instead of being established there, as in England, by dint of arms, and all at once, it became gradually generalized. The German nations that overran Gaul were, in a great degree, independent; and, after dividing the conquered lands, they separated. Their tenures were at first precarious, but depended more upon the nation than upon the king, until Hugo Capet, in order to render the crown to which he had been elected hereditary, established the hereditaryship of fiefs as a general principle, and the feudal system was completed in France. The lords who had elected Capet became still more independent, and reserved the right of making war, not merely among themselves, but even against the king himself, so that his authority was almost nominal over the minor sovereigns who swarmed through the country. But William of Normandy, having subdued by arms the faction that opposed his succession to the crown of England, held its destinies more firmly in his hands, and divided the territory into smaller fiefs, the possessors of which were consequently more under his sway and loaded with harder conditions of fealty. Thus the kingdom of France was divided into parts strong enough to be independent, and rivals of the throne itself; while the minuteness of the portions into which Britain was separated promoted their union as the means of resisting the sovereign. Hence, too, the great vassals of France were strong enough to injure their inferiors, and oppression descended in regular gradation through every order of society; while the English feudatories were compelled by their own weakness to look to the lowest of the vassals for assistance.

From these facts, which are historical, De Lolme infers the disunion and despotism which was the lot of France—the union and liberty which ensued to Britain. But many observations occur before they can be entirely admitted. In the first place, why did Capet and William find it expedient and possible to act as they did in their respective dominions? Why did the German nations that overran Gaul split into such large fiefs, and why were the chiefs so tyrannical and the vassals so servile? Why did no union ever arise among the French; and why, in Britain, did it absolutely grow out of division? In the next place, these facts never can be considered as causes. They are, at most, the means by which the ends were accomplished in each nation—the intermediates between cause and effect, but not intrinsically either the one or the other. Lastly, it would seem that the situation of France, divided into



of the peculiar tyranny which was once attributed to him, was but the introduction of laws and customs prevalent among other nations, and which there excited no complaints. Of these the principal were, the separation of the ecclesiastical from the civil courts—the forest laws, which put nearly upon the same footing the life of a stag and of a man—the diminution of the authority of the county courts, and the extension of the king's juridical power, in the first instance, to all parts of the kingdom, as in the duchy of Normandy—trial by combat in lieu of trial by jury—the absorption of all the lands by the crown, and their distribution upon feudal tenures—the curfew—the neglect of maritime advantages. This state of things continued during two reigns; but the more than questionable right of Henry I. gave the nation an opportunity of redressing it in part. The charter granted by this monarch was a compact between the sovereign and the people, which, if not as complete as others that followed, surpassed in wisdom anything practised in contemporary nations, Spain alone, perhaps, excepted. This example was followed by another usurper, the successor of Henry; and, in a parliament assembled at Oxford, Stephen confirmed the former charter, and added some new privileges, but none so important as the stipulation in the former reign—that whatever immunities were granted by the crown to the barons, the barons should grant the like to their vassals. During the Norman dynasty, the kings of England were raised higher above their great feudatories than were the kings of France; but, on the other hand,

large fiefs, was more favorable to resist oppression than the smaller fiefs of England. If but two or three such mighty vassals as some who owed allegiance to the French monarch had combined to humble him, he must have yielded; but not less than two hundred British lords could have successfully stood against William. Now, the difficulty of uniting two hundred is extreme, and so must be the patriotism which could have bound them together, and made them receive the lowest of the people into their union, to participate in a fair proportion of toils and emoluments. Love of country, enlightened by wisdom, ennobled by virtue, accomplished this end, and the British constitution was established. But the cause of this constitution was the character of the British nation, and no feature of it more distinctly than the proud patriotism which had its origin in the natural circumstances of the country.



the great feudatories of Britain were nearer to the rule and power of their own vassals; and thus was prepared the union between the different classes of the nation, founded upon a community of interests. For a long time no baron had appeared in England powerful enough to oppose the will of the monarch with his single strength, while in France there were many vassals, each of whom was hardly less mighty than the chief of all. Hence arose, in the former case, union; in the latter, rivalry.

The reign of Henry II. was still more favorable to the liberties of the subject. The constitutions of Clarendon checked the usurpations of the clergy, and a prohibition of appeal to the pope considerably diminished his influence. Eleven hundred and fifteen strong castles belonging to the nobility were demolished—the laws of Edward the Confessor were revived—the charter of Henry I. was confirmed—the wager of battle was restricted—the trial by jury was encouraged—personal service in military expeditions was commuted for scutage, and, after an existence of above a century, the feudal system began to decline.

But the monarch under whom the effects of the happy texture, which had been interwoven of the interests of the barons and the people, most powerfully showed themselves, was John. From him the great fundamental charter of British liberty was won by the barons, united with the entire nation, all acting in concert. The first intention of the outraged nobility was, perhaps, no more than to obtain the confirmation of former charters; but finding themselves sufficiently strong to make further demands, supported as they were by every class of men, they attempted to enlarge the privileges first acquired. These, after much resistance, were obtained, and such a code of popular rights had not yet been seen in Christendom. It is no disparagement to the spirit of the nation, that this mean, perfidious sovereign broke his compact in a few months after he had made it, and deceived his subjects as far as lay in his power. The people soon recovered what his treachery denied.

If the Magna Charta of Britain be compared with any of the compacts existing at the same period in other nations,

an immense superiority must be found in the virtue and wisdom which could devise and execute such a system, over the vice and ignorance which elsewhere rendered men indifferent to liberty, or else unable to assert their native rights. In France no compact of any kind was known in the year 1215; and it was not till 1355 that the people of that country exacted from their king of the same name, a charter, as much inferior to the Magna Charta of Britain as the parliament of the former country was to the parliament of the latter in the eighteenth century. Moreover, the charter of the English nation constitutes at this day the active basis of their rights; the ordonnances of the French John were no sooner won and talked of, than they fell into disuse, and their execution has never since been demanded. Another thing most remarkable is the moderation of the English barons, for they never thought of compelling the sovereign to any concession which was not directed as much to the benefit of the lower, as of the higher orders. In the various commotions of France no class of society ever rose to supremacy without immediately disdaining the interests of their associates, and substituting personal advantage for the public welfare.

The reign of Henry III. would be still more important than that of John, if it were certain that in it really began the unequivocal representation of the commons; but be that as it may, their influence became more manifest under this sovereign, who granted a new charter, and renewed the old. His son obtained the title of the English Justinian.

In the Anglo-Saxon government, the power of peace and war was in the hands of the Wittenagemote, but under the Norman princes this right, with many others, was curtailed. Still, however, the national council was not suppressed, and even the victorious William, four years after his landing, summoned a meeting, composed of twelve persons chosen in each county. The custom never was discontinued, and national assemblies, be their name and composition what they might, were frequent; but between his reign and that of Edward I., the lower orders had acquired more weight—the towns had become more wealthy—instruction had been

diffused—the Normans had been converted into Britons, and a new order of things was most auspiciously preparing. The people, indeed, felt the desire of liberty, before they knew how to secure it, and their first attempts were not complete; but in the reign of Edward I. a change was effected, which showed a ripeness of intention and a power of execution, that had yet to find their equals in the world.

The commons had not been admitted \* into parliament eighteen years, before they formed a separate deliberating body, and, in 1282, was actually elicited a mighty fragment to compose a new controlling power, which, till then, had existed only virtually. The division of the national council into two portions, naturally depending upon analogous distinctions in society, was of more importance to liberty, than the multiplied charters wrested from many sovereigns. These were the deeds and parchments of freedom—the separation of the commons was its immortal spirit. When the people so often compelled the gallant Edward to ratify their demands, they only said that liberty was the air, without which they could not live. When the commons took their station beside the king and the nobles, to form the stable tripod of the realm, they further showed that they knew how to improve the holy inspiration.

The parliamentary history of England is the tale of British liberty. From the year 1293, the sessions became more regular, and the legislative body acquired experience and influence. All the attributes which, in Spain, were in the hands of the Cortes, in England were vested in two houses, and the division of authority was a guarantee against its abuse. Among the causes which contributed to add power to the commons was the accession of the lesser nobility, the knights of the shires containing a large portion of the landed interest, and in a short time the lower house was able to maintain the throne against the nobility; but the rapidity with which the exact privileges due to each house,

\* It is in vain to say that the origin of their admission was the rebellion of Leicester. Had they not been powerful he would not have summoned them; had they not been enlightened and honest, they could not have maintained the ground thus won, in after ages.

and consistent with its rank and functions, were allotted to it, is one of the extraordinary proofs of wisdom in the history of this nation. The right of disposing of the people's money devolved to the people's representatives, and the peers had only to grant or to withhold their assent to taxes without an observation. The right of forming a supreme court of appeal became the property of the peers, and the right of accusing state delinquents before that court, was engrossed by the commons. The internal regulations, too, of each house were ordained by itself. The advantages of the division of parliament were most essentially felt in the reigns of Edward II. and Richard II., for, had but one power existed in the state after the deposition of these monarchs, the greatest calamities might have ensued.

It is not, however, to be supposed that Britain should proceed in the career of liberty without some interruptions; or that, while the people were busy, the king should not attend to his own interests. Certainly the tide of freedom had many ebbs; but still it was the tide of freedom. It would be too long to follow it through all its changes. In the weak reigns of the two monarchs just mentioned, it gained strength. The ill-founded title of Henry IV. was favorable to it. The chivalrous acts of Henry V. almost dazzled the nation into blindness at its decline. The civil wars of York and Lancaster put it still further out of sight. The weariness of the combatants, the jealousy of Henry VII., that monarch's own character, repressed it, even though many of his laws were excellent. But the reign of his son was that during which it was in the most pitiful condition which it ever had known in England since the first dawn of civilisation.

The low and mean subjection to which the parliament had reduced itself under this monarch, and the general indifference of the nation toward liberty, are the events in the history of this country for which it is the most difficult to account. The too solid title of Henry VIII. to the throne, the disputes concerning religion, all the reasons which historians and philosophers have adduced, do not sufficiently explain it. But the fact is certain; and this chasm in

British liberty has prompted some to say that this boasted constitution contains no check to restrain the rod of any stern and resolute tyrant, firmly bent upon acting according to his will alone.

It is true that the reign of this Tudor is a blot in the history of England; but would it be so in the history of any other nation? Would it not, in many kingdoms of Europe, rather be a period of mildness and good government; or, at the least, an average season of happiness and freedom? It is true that he did divorce and put to death his wives as he pleased; that he did imprison and execute many of his subjects unjustly; that he did levy taxes without the consent of parliament; that this body did most basely sink from the spirit of its Saxon ancestry, and declare itself a cypher in the state. But was the tyranny of his contemporary monarchs and rivals less severely felt in their respective nations? Was not Charles V. at least as despotic in Spain, notwithstanding the opposition of the cortes? Was the most cruel and oppressive act of Henry as bad as the murders committed by Francis I. in the name of religion? What was the declaration of parliament that Henry's will should be law, but the constant practice of France? and the dereliction of right, which was momentary in England, there was eternal. Here, at least, the national councils were not abolished, for their form was revered even when the spirit was no more. But that spirit had not fled for ever; and the first year of the succeeding reign saw all the arbitrary acts repealed. Under the gloomy bigotry of Mary, another short ebb occurred; and the glory of Elizabeth, the most splendid, the most fortunate, and the most popular monarch of this country, made the people a little regardless of their liberties when they saw upon the throne a woman and a heroine. But the intentions of this sovereign were far from being like those of her father or sister; and though she did not entirely interfere with the prerogatives of the parliament, she endeavored not to allow them as much scope as was guaranteed by the constitution. The Star-Chamber and the Court of High Commission were powerful engines still in the hands of despotism; but they who attribute too

much to them, or compare the state of England at that moment with that of any other country, forget the numerous checks which kept those tribunals in respect. As well might they say that, because the monarch can dissolve the British parliament when he pleases, that body has no more authority than that which Louis XIV. dispossessed with his hunting-whip. Nothing can be more ill-founded and preposterous than some observations which Mr. Hume has made upon this reign.

The progress of arts, manufactures, commerce, navigation, the enlargement of the world, which nautical discoveries had swollen into a vaster sphere, had, for many years, been preparing a new era for the creatures who inhabit it; and, among the nations it contained, none was so situated to take advantage of the benefits of the age as that which lay between the ancient seat of civilised empires and the regions which were yet to be cultivated. Immense treasures, both of wealth and knowledge, flowed into England, and, as has always occurred there, the largest fell to the lot of the people. In every country where popular exertion is awakened by permanent, that is to say, by natural causes, the slumbers of the nation must be short or else eternal.

Not all the glory of Elizabeth—not all the power which she held in her hands, could quite prevent the people from feeling that, during the dynasty of the Tudors, many of their rights had been invaded. They felt that the government of this princess was not the entire inheritance bequeathed by the Saxons, much less that birthright improved, as it should be, by time and experience; and the close of her life saw less submissive commons than the commencement. But this spirit was not destined to show itself in action under her; and its maturity was reserved for the house of Stuart.

James I. brought with him from the North less enlightened opinions than those which were every day becoming current in the south of the island. Scotland, not having yet overcome natural difficulties, could not stand on a level with England; and the guilty but unfortunate mother of James had imparted to her son the most pernicious prin-

ciples. The constitution had not changed, nor was James himself of so despotic a mind as most of his immediate predecessors. Nothing, then, had occurred to make redress more urgent than under Henry VII. Since his time, since the death of Elizabeth, one thing, indeed, had changed—the nation. The nation had become too sensible of the injuries which it had sustained, and too much alive to its rights, any longer to be patient; and a small portion of the wrongs at which, but lately, it did not even murmur, were now too much to be borne. The most complete answer that can be made to those who draw unfavorable conclusions from the state of the constitution under Henry VIII. may be deduced from the present moment. Without any change or innovation the liberty of England revived; and the casual tyranny of the Tudors, the attempts of the Stuarts to found that tyranny upon principles, and to combine it into a constitutional system, served as a warning to the people that their claims could be protected but by a counter system, more closely knit together than any which single-handed despotism could oppose.

The resistance to James did not arise from any of his acts, but was a discussion of principles. He laid claim to absolute power as his birthright; and he maintained it as a schoolman, not as a warrior. He made many attempts to set aside parliaments, to alter their nature, to intimidate them, but in vain. He extorted money from his subjects, and was still distressed. His conduct was haughty, weak, and wavering; the commons were steady, calm, and dignified. Happy is it for the nation whose liberty depends upon the maintenance of principles, and whose indignation is sensitive enough to be roused by unjust claims, without waiting till unjust acts begin! Happy, too, the nation that knows how to be patient under the injustice of others, when no remedy can cure them, rather than to be unjust itself!

The second Stuart brought on the first catastrophe of that ill-fated house. The system of the sovereign was the same as in the reign of his father; but the opposition was stronger. The parliament interfered in the management of the subsidies granted to the king; but their great misde-



meanour, in the opinion of the threatening monarch, was the petition of right, a wise and noble supplement to the Magna Charta. Other grievances were enumerated ; but, unfortunately, while so many just causes of complaint were found, speculative minds expatiated beyond the bounds of practicable reform. The wisest projects became abortive. Fanaticism, religious and political, seized on every branch of the controlling powers ; and, after much tergiversation, bad faith and misconduct on the part of the monarch, and much violence, extravagance, and folly in the people, this sovereign lost his life, according to the sentence pronounced by men who had no authority to try him, and who were at once his accusers and his judges. But his murder was, as may be supposed on account of its injustice, unprofitable to liberty, and the day of emancipation was deferred. The minions of the people became their masters ; and Cromwell, who, by his boldness, his duplicity, his dexterity, and his profound policy, had raised himself to the protectorate, ruled with more arbitrary sway than the monarch whom he had deposed and murdered. The disappointment which republican tyranny had created in the minds of all who expected liberty from this revolution, the calamities, the disgust which it had produced, brought about the restoration ; but so hurried and precipitate was this measure, that no attention was paid to secure the main object of so much contention. The zealots of freedom who, but a few years earlier, had set their country in flames, were satisfied with some vague and general protestations from Charles II., which his wit and affability, the levity and pliability of his character, his knowledge of courts, and his want of principle, enabled him to elude. For a long time every person seemed intent upon healing the wounds which insubordination had made ; nevertheless, the solicitude of the nation reverted again to liberty, while the king was as anxiously endeavouring to extend his prerogative.

It must not be supposed, however, that, in a country like England, where liberty was the native produce of the land, the various checks and oppositions, the ambition of kings, or the licentiousness of republicans, could stifle it



altogether. It prospered amid the vices of both, and was matured into the happy growth in which it is now enjoyed. The former attempt had given the nation experience, had taught what should be done, and what should be avoided, to make freedom secure and peaceable. The revolution which deprived the house of Stuart of the throne of England, at the end of the seventeenth century, was the greatest instance of political wisdom ever given in the world \*. It confirmed all that the nation had been struggling to obtain for ages. It increased and secured the rights of the people, and provided the wisest guarantees for their maintenance. The balance of authority was so admirably established, that no encroachments can be attempted without giving a commotion to the whole machine, and spreading a general alarm until equilibrium is restored, and rest returns again.

Since the revolution of 1688, the liberty of England has experienced as little fluctuation as any national affairs can be expected to do in such a lapse of time. During the last century the tendency of the public mind has been uniformly toward an increase of freedom. George III., one of the most upright monarchs that ever sat upon a throne, voluntarily curtailed his prerogative in two most essential points; and added another bond to keep the keystone of the arch immoveable. The same spirit has been fostered, too, by the increasing prosperity of the commercial and the manufacturing interests; and the greater weight which the enlightened and opulent men engaged in those pursuits have acquired. Liberty never is so well secured as by the lights which industry and trade bring home. The agriculturist studies the nature of his soil, his ploughshare, his seeds, and his crops; but the manufacturer speculates in a wider range of materials and of products; and the merchant learns the wants and the wealth of every country. How much greater,

\* It has been said, that England owes everything to the prince of Orange; and that, without his virtue and moderation, the revolution would not have succeeded. But William was compelled to assume the mind of the nation much more frequently than he could guide it; and the tide of events was directed more by the spirit of the people and its representatives than by the influence of the king.

then, must be the wisdom which such extensive relations beget ! how much nobler the pride resulting from such efforts ! and how much more firm the security which such constant exertions will exact from government !

Though the British constitution may not be perfect, yet so well balanced a system of rights and duties cannot be found in history. Natural difficulties uniting every man, and every class of men, no selfish interests interfered to make it but a partial blessing ; or, if such feelings ever did exist, they were the enlarged, the enlightened feelings of social and of national interests. To wrest the charters from Henry, from John, from Edward ; to expel the despicable James, every class united ; and none obtained a privilege which it did not share with the others. In France, where common necessities were less, every man was labouring for himself ; every class was struggling to pull down all above or to trample on all beneath it ; and nobles, clergy, lawyers, universities, third estates vied, not so much to become great, as to prevent others from being more prosperous than themselves. There the most preposterous union was formed ; one from which no result can be expected but despotism—the union of the sovereign with the people, to crush the nobility. In England the combination was between the classes which stand the nearest in interest and in rank ; between the nobles and the people, to oppose the power of the king ; that is to say, between every class of the governed to curb the encroachments of the governing. From this resulted liberty.

The various orders of society could not have continued in this state but by means of a compact formed by the profoundest knowledge of the privileges to be allowed, and of the restrictions to be put to every claim. This again could not be effected without a thorough acquaintance with all the passions which are likely to disturb mankind, and all the checks which can be opposed to their suggestions ; in a word, without the most deep and extensive study of the human being in all his aspects. Had an attempt been made to eradicate the impulses which nature has twined round the human heart, to erase the feelings which are indelible, to

annihilate the passions which no reason can subdue, the fabric of British liberty would yet have been to erect. But they who framed it were far too wise for this. By a miraculous anticipation of the laws of physical nature, whose secrets were then but little understood, they put two contrasting powers at variance, to procure a point of rest. They calmed one headlong desire by exciting an antagonist passion as mighty as itself. The philosopher who seeks an invariable measure of time, does not waste the energies of his mind in vain attempts to tear the property of dilatation out of the steel which he uses ; but employs the still greater expansion of a second metal to correct the first. The astronomer, seeing that light cannot be refracted without being decomposed, does not oppose the separation of the violet from the red, but takes advantage of a still more dispersive medium than the first, to reconstruct the solar ray. By such wise rules as these did they proceed who framed the liberty of England. They left the native man entire, with all his feelings, wants and passions, and poised the whole machine by his own contending weights. They considered the very exuberances of nature to be useful, and wisely held that every mean was a resource by which her apparent errors could be corrected.

The different parts of the British empire, formerly three kingdoms, afford sufficient proof that liberty and pride are the concomitant results of natural difficulties. Scotland, having greater obstacles to overcome than England, consumed more time before she could attain an equal degree of social culture ; and the progress of good government was slower there. Thus, although something like a parliament existed under Malcolm II., in the beginning of the tenth century, it was composed but of two estates—ecclesiastical and lay lords. Under Robert I., the commons took a share in the legislature ; and, though the cities of Scotland had formed what was denominated ‘ the parliament of boroughs,’ still further modified, at a later period, into ‘ the convention of royal boroughs,’ the people continued long to have but little influence. It was in vain that James I., in the beginning of the fifteenth century, endeavoured to enforce

attendance to parliamentary duties ; the middle orders were not yet enlightened enough to see that their interest was to obey ; and one hundred and fifty years elapsed before anything effectual was practised. Yet, even then, and at the period when, to the south of the Tweed, the national mind was preparing the great work of the revolution, the division of the two orders into two chambers was not thought of ; and the controlling power of the people, small as it was, was still further diminished by being absorbed in the overweening majority of nobles, voting in common with them. The lords of the articles, too, were an institution more favorable to despotism than any constitutional establishment of England ; and, though the language of the Scotch parliament might be bold, the political system was not knit together with wisdom and combination.

But after the union of both kingdoms the improvement of the Scottish nation was most rapid. The institutions of England soon became appreciated ; commerce, wealth, and learning were speedily diffused, and the northern portion of the island, ever since that day, has been reaping the compensation which was due to a later outset in the career of social cultivation. If any part of this kingdom is, at this moment, capable of a republican government—if any of the inhabitants of Great Britain possess the simple virtues of men who can exist in peace, without the checks which hereditary rights oppose to the successive ambition of generations—if any have the cool and prudent wisdom which gives authority to reason over passion, it is in the north that they can be found. Even before the Scotch became enlightened enough to enjoy a combined system of political rights, they possessed the spirit, which only wants maturity of mind to become free.

The condition of Ireland was nearly the reverse of this. Too fertile in such productions as the climate tolerates, that island was too thoughtless to be anxious about good government, and received its first lessons from a people ~~w~~<sup>h</sup> considered as conquerors. The Irish were particular~~l~~ civilised at the time of Henry II., and the English ~~r~~ retained the laws and customs of the mother-co

Thus an assembly like the British parliament was introduced by strangers, and its division into two houses was not the indigenous result of Irish wisdom. In the course of time, however, these pupils of the British began to feel their own importance, and to claim more privileges than their instructors were willing to grant. By the lessons received from a more advanced population than themselves, they have been imbued with principles of liberty and sound policy, which otherwise they might not have learnt so well, and the branch of social improvement which has outstripped the rest is the theory of government; but as this is not the native growth of the country, it is probable that, were the precepts and examples by which the present state of policy is maintained to be suddenly withdrawn, it would soon decay, to make room for something in which moderation would bear a smaller share.

The three nations which have now been examined—the Spanish, French, and British—contain almost all the principles which are to be found in modern history, respecting the theory of political liberty. The first is an instance of a people placed in easy natural circumstances, but pressed by factitious difficulties—proud, as long as those difficulties lasted—wise and virtuous while proud, but who lost their freedom as soon as the varying cause from which it sprung diminished. The second is a nation enjoying all the luxuries of soil and climate—never proud, never thoughtful, and never free—possessing once, indeed, the independence which belongs to rude, unoccupied men, but never knowing the reflection which fully combines in one community the divided powers of individuals. The third is an island not so favoured by nature as the preceding empires, but whose moral forces were called into greater action. There the inhabitants, anticipating the best basis of liberty—pride, seemed instinctively to know that their greatness was inseparable from their freedom. Success did not interrupt their exertions, nor did splendor lull to rest the men who were engaged in the arduous undertaking. The only nation to whom prosperity has not given a fatal security, whom wealth has not made idle, or liberty licentious, is England. In

Spain, freedom was the companion of an infant existence, and became retrograde as the nation recovered its strength. In England, liberty began with the first feelings of the people, and grew as these were enlarged. In France, it might, in very rude times, have been a vague desire, but the wisdom to combine it into a system was always wanting. In that nation may be studied the philosophy of arbitrary rule, gilded by many deceitful glories, and the frustration of every generous political sentiment, by the pettinesses of vanity. In Spain may be learned the decay of freedom by the cessation of difficulties. In England, its progressive development by their incessant action; and these three empires contain the most striking features which are to be found in the history of modern European liberty.

While the order of nature has thus been strictly followed in Europe, and nations have obeyed her invariable laws, a new and sudden phenomenon has started up in a continent, which but lately was uncultivated, and political rights have been extended to a degree which hitherto was thought impracticable. The liberty which, in the freest realm of Europe, was confined to generations, is in the United States of America enlarged to individuals, and no privilege, except the possession of property, is transmissible to the posterity of the immediate occupant. The executive seat, in monarchies called the throne, is vacated every five years, and the sovereign returns to his condition of subject again, while another is chosen from the same class to fill his place. Aristocracy is not hereditary, neither are titles, rank, or honors; every man comes into the world with equal prospects, and leaves his children on the same level with those of all his fellow-citizens.

These principles are more in unison with the inherent rights of men than any which are to be met with in Europe, and approach as closely to the state of natural policy as it is possible for any system of organised society to do. In the most luxurious nation of this continent, hereditary honors were a privilege derived from antiquity, and no virtues, no achievements of modern date, could raise the family of a hero of the eighteenth century, to equal consideration with one



which could trace back its ancestry to the ages of feudal ferocity. The proudest nation of Europe emancipated itself, in a great measure, from this prejudice, and while it preserved an institution of nobility, of which experience had hitherto taught the necessity, it left that order open to every man, and allowed the illustration of future and of present generations, no less than it respected the honors of the past; but the United States made a still nearer approach to Nature, and, removing the barrier which France had raised to every present hope, and which England had reserved for the descendants of the men who successively do her honor, they declared that none should wear a badge of distinction but the individual who had won it, and that the son of the meritorious, if not himself deserving, should stand no farther forward than if his father never had been distinguished.

The American constitution, founded on this and similar principles, has now been in practice about half a century, during which the circumstances of the country have not so changed as to produce a material difference of national character. The settlers there were Englishmen, who, nourished with the bread of liberty, had conceived more exalted notions of natural rights than had been found practicable in the mother country. They spread over regions which, like ancient Greece, required to be cleared of its forests, and to have its deserts put into cultivation. There these men found ample occupation, and their spirit did not decline. The succession of new regions, equally necessary for their habitation, and equally in need of culture, has employed their descendants in the same manner, and as yet there has been no cessation of labour or of thought. The old and the new causes of national character have been in unison, and the republicans of the western world have been encouraged to extend their ancient liberties, rather than to put restrictions upon the rights imparted by their British ancestors.

But how far such a system of policy, where none can claim the precedent of a father to stop the wild ambition of a son, is practicable among men not intensely occupied with the nascent fortunes of the state, cannot be determined from

the experience of so short a period. To deny the possibility of its success, even in a condensed population, would be setting too contracted limits to human powers; to admit it without sufficient proof, would be to allow too dangerous a latitude to theory. The trial is now making, and future generations will learn the result; but nothing which men have seen offers so stupendous an object of political speculation as the confederated republic of the United States. Extended all at once over a tract of country larger than the average of European monarchies—taking for example, as it were, the immense features with which Nature has distinguished that continent—connected, not divided by the variations of soil which intersect the territory—no appreciable portion of time was spent in combining it into one empire. Born in the state of maturity, yet retaining the simplicity of childhood, with faculties adult, and only infant wants, the Anglo-American colony no sooner claimed its independent existence than she was admitted into the assembly of nations, and took her place in the councils of civilisation. While her promise of prosperity was greater than was ever held out to a realm so young, she formed her political system upon principles which, till then, had been found practicable only in mediocrity, and the human race is interested in the event. Should an empire so rich in natural advantages, whose coming prosperity is so far beyond the reach of accident, continue to unite to so much brilliancy a system of liberty, which is more in unison with Nature than that of any preceding community, should the United States of America demonstrate that the extremes, which hitherto had been deemed incompatible, really can co-exist, it will be confessed that the descendants of Europeans in the New World have surpassed their ancestors in virtue and wisdom. The nation which can govern the largest empire with the equal and fraternal laws of a small community, and bestow more than Athenian liberty on more than Persian power, is the best and wisest of the globe.

But while more of civilisation than luxury—more of reason than imagination, distinguish the government of North



America, the South is pursuing a different path. Instructed by less competent masters, and formed by less propitious circumstances, the Spanish and the Portuguese Americans seem to know no medium between monarchical and popular tyranny, and to be capable of nothing better than the modern despotism of their parent nations.

It now remains for time to show whether the freest nation of Europe or of America has made the fairest estimate of human capabilities—whether society can be established on such simple principles as to require none of the checks and counterpoises which form the harmony of the British constitution—and whether a great nation can govern itself as the United States have attempted to do, upon so close an imitation of Nature, whose great author, even while he permitted individual inequality, did not entail it upon generations, or make it the badge and property of classes.

The preceding observations are applicable only to independent nations, that possess the means of practising the ideas which their virtue and wisdom may teach them respecting government; but the condition of dependant states is different, and men who have every moral requisite for freedom, may yet want the physical force by which it is defended.

Two causes influence the political institutions of colonies and dependant states: 1st, The natural circumstances of the country in which they are placed; 2dly, The action of the mother-country upon their habits and mind. The former may be appreciated by the laws which govern mankind in general—the latter are more complicated. When the natural circumstances of the colony and of the mother country are alike, their action is the same; but when they differ, a struggle commences between domestic and extraneous influences, which disturbs the progress of improvement.

But what principally influences the disposition communicated to the dependant state is, the mode in which institutions are imparted to it by the mother country, and the acknowledged superiority of the instructor over the pupil.

A colony nearly powerful enough to assert its independence, reluctantly bears the rule of a foreign state. Neither benefits nor remonstrances can bind it, and it rejects with

indignation the kindness which is offered as a boon. It would hold as a right what is granted as a favor—it refuses to submit to any sacrifice, which has not the appearance of being voluntary, and repels every insinuation which implies a forced compliance; but when the dependant state is so small as not to discern a chance of casting off the yoke, it bends to its situation more easily, and resigns itself with patience to the condition in which it would be useless to attempt an alteration.

This disposition is founded upon a general principle of human nature, for where is the man who can be independent, yet would remain the servant of another. Necessity alone begets subjection, and the surest motive for discarding it, is the power to do so.

The sensibility of larger colonies generally produces an irritation equally inimical to their own repose, and to the advantages which they, as well as the mother country, might derive from a more cordial understanding. Every boon which the parent would bestow is received with distrust, because the crowning gift of emancipation does not accompany it, and the bountiful hand of the protectress is accused for not letting loose the reins which, were she to abandon them, never could be held by the men who complain.

It rarely happens that any country imparts to its colonies the entire advantages of government which it enjoys at home. The Greeks, the Romans, all nations, ancient and modern, confirm this opinion; but it is not true that the greater the liberty of the mother country, the greater also is her jealousy, and the more she restricts the privileges which she grants to her dependant states.

Jealousy is a sentiment which the greatness of liberty disowns; but a nation which is itself enslaved, cannot give a larger share of that which it does not possess, than one which is rich in generous feelings. The contrast indeed, be greater between a free country and than between a despotic empire and its  
and it is probable, too, that the  
deprived of some privileges, may

those of despotic empires deprived of all; but not even the authority of Montesquieu can convince us that all the freedom of the latter can be so enviable as the lot of colonies depending upon the realms of liberty.

But the question may be decided by facts, and according to principles not easily subverted. If it be true, that dependence never is voluntary, and if it can be proved that the colonies of free nations are those which, *cæteris paribus*, have, in the shortest time, become independent, the assertion of this great writer is fully controverted. To do this the period elapsed since the discovery of the New World is all that need be consulted.

The southern nations of Europe had formed their establishments in South America before the British had turned their thoughts toward the North, and the country in which they settled was more disposed by Nature to attain a quick and easy prosperity. The discovery of Columbus dates from 1498; the first settlement of the British was attempted in 1583, eighty-five years later. The independence of the British colonies was asserted in 1776, and acknowledged in 1783, exactly two centuries after the first attempt at their establishment; the independence of the Spanish colonies began to be asserted in 1810; Brazil was declared to be an independent kingdom in 1816: but the condition of the United States at the time when the insurrection began there, was as much superior to that of Spanish and Portuguese America in moral and intellectual culture, as England is to Spain and Portugal; neither is it easy at this day to foresee the moment when Mexico, Peru, and Chili, with Brazil and Buenos Ayres, will stand as exalted in civilisation as did the north-eastern regions of the same continent, even in 1776. Thus, then, the colonies of England made infinitely greater advances toward knowledge, power, and independence in two centuries, than did the colonies of Spain and Portugal in three; but they could not have done so, if the dependant provinces of free countries were more harshly treated than those of despotic empires. The only portion of the western hemisphere which is truly independent, and in which the principles of liberty have taken root, is the only

portion of it which belonged to a free country. This portion, indeed, had been educated to pride, and half a century ago it did most nobly find quarrel in a straw, which the colonies of other nations have not yet discovered to be ponderable, but in which much honor was at stake. The emancipation of the British American colonies is one of the brightest acts of England. The cause of this great event was not the ill usage which she inflicted upon them—that was the pretext; it was not the right of taxation which she asserted over them unrepresented—that was the motive. The cause was this: Britain had taught them the lessons of liberty—she had shown them the paths of prosperity, she had shared with them her laws, her spirit, and her strength, and given them her own fiery sensibility to injustice. It was with British principles that they completed the greatest, the wisest, the most humane revolution which mankind has yet beheld, and set an example to the western world which no part of it has yet followed. None but a free, enlightened, industrious country would have accomplished such a purpose, and proved that, by assimilating its colonies to their mother country, a generous nation may, in a short period, create a wider empire than itself, and teach that empire freedom.

Of modern nations, that which has established the greatest number of colonies, and whose colonies have attained the highest prosperity, is England. It is not with a view to conquest or immediate aggrandisement that she has founded infant empires. Her motive was commerce—the most fostering principle by which colonisation can be directed. Two new realms are at this moment under her care, one of them situated in the extremities of the largest continent of the world, the other still farther removed from the mother country, and but newly known. To these she is imparting the same education which she once gave to America, and the result will be the same; but whether the regions watered by the Indus and the Ganges, which mingle their currents with the ocean under the northern tropic—whether the territory of New Holland, lying at the same distance on the opposite side of the B— can adopt and prac-

tise the same degree of liberty, is a different question. Independence they must attain, because they will attain prosperity ; but whether, when they shake off the yoke, they will improve upon the constitution of their ancestors, or even imitate it, must depend upon the power which education can assume, to alter the disposition implanted by natural circumstances.

Who can say that, when population shall have become more dense—when the natural influence of the fertile states of the south shall have had time to act upon their inhabitants—when commerce shall have added foreign luxuries, and brought home foreign wealth—when the improvement of the now barbarous Indians shall have necessitated the existence of standing armies, the present checks shall be sufficient, and that the Americans may not owe their future slavery to the simplicity of their present institutions.

There is a single state most intimately connected with England—be it called a colony or otherwise—which is destined never to be independent, but whose force and resources are such that it submits with reluctance, and almost flatters itself it could exist alone. Of all the provinces of the empire, Ireland is that which has been the most favored by British tuition and example—which has more closely followed the precepts, and shared the institutions of the mother country—and partaken in all the vicissitudes of her glory and reverses. Still the points of contact have not been so intimate as might have been hoped, and differences have shown themselves which would not have occurred, had the smaller territory been less favored by Nature.

If the two islands had formed but one, the condition of the whole would have been more alike, and all the improvements of England would have made their way over it unaccompanied by humiliation. But the interruption of the ocean long persuaded Ireland that she was a separate country, and she submitted not to reason but to force.

Had Ireland been placed on the other side of England, between that island and the continent, she might perhaps have been tributary to some great naval state, or subject of perpetual disputes, and the theatre of battles.



ing invaders. Her lot might have been still more precarious, and her political existence a series of oppressions from the rivalry of alternate conquerors.

But if Ireland had been situated many degrees farther to the west, she might have been an independent state, not because she would have been strong enough to defend herself, but because she would have been a less desirable acquisition to foreign possessors. She would have lost many of the advantages which the vicinity of Europe and of England now gives her—she would not have been so civilised, so free, or have borne so large a share in the general concerns of the world.

But as she now is, independence is a dream. The hope of emancipation may, on every bickering, lead to disastrous attempts, which must be delusive. England must fall before Ireland can stand alone. The interests of both countries are as firmly knit together as if no sea divided them, notwithstanding the uneasy sensation of dependence which the smaller island feels.

Whatever complaints may be made by Ireland of the injustice of England—whatever ills she may really have borne—whatever delay she may have met with in her social career, the primary and original cause is this: She is too weak and too near a powerful empire to belong to herself—she is too strong, too near the possibility of standing alone, not to feel the irksomeness of dependence. At first she thought the English too like conquerors—at the last, too much resembling masters. Yet the fault was not either in the English or the Irish, but in Nature and geography. The Isle of Man, which does not partake so largely of the blessings of the British constitution, bears the privation easily, while Ireland complains, not in proportion to her grievances, but to her strength.

Had Ireland been intersected by the ocean, and thus formed two or more islands, the parts would have more immediately perceived the necessity of dependence. Their conquest and their submission would have cost fewer sacrifices, and the blessings which England can so amply diffuse would not have been rejected. She would then have been

as any cluster of unconnected islands, as the Orkneys or the Hebrides, and never would have known a dream of independence. The happiest lot for her, as for the whole empire, certainly would have been for the two islands to have formed but one; the next degree of advantage would have been, the division of Ireland at least into two parts. The most disastrous lot would have been, if the smaller island had lain between the larger and the continent. The growth of America may a little alter these conditions.

If so much force, so long applied, had not been necessary to subdue the strength of Ireland, the benefits which England undoubtedly conferred would have been better appreciated. The civilisation which she brought would not have been held as a badge of subjection, and the natives would have grown more rapidly enlightened. The consequences would have been a better government, as complete in practice as in theory—an intimate mixture of the men of both countries would have ensued—a pious and enlightened creed would, as in England, have supplanted one that is imaginative and superstitious, and religious broils, the most fatal cause of harm, would not have been known. To her weakness Ireland owes the misfortune of dependence—to her strength, the calamity of having been conquered, not united—to both together she owes her being a part, and a very important part, of the freest and the proudest empire upon earth.

The situation of Hungary with regard to Austria is, in some respects, like that of Ireland to England, while, in other instances, it is different. Hungary is, in fact, a freer nation, and enjoys a better constitution than Austria, while the reverse is true of the other dependant state. Hence the dependence of Hungary is, in fact, more grievous, although the complaints are not so loud. The vanity of the Hungarians is greater than that of the Irish, because the country is more productive in such things as require a warmer climate. The liberty which they enjoy is less; and, though they imagine their government to be representative, there is but one chamber, where all the orders vote collectively—whose meetings formerly were annual, but afterwards trien-

nial, and, in later times, a period of twenty-five years has elapsed without its being convened. England certainly has shown more solicitude about the liberties of Ireland, than Austria has done about the Hungarian constitution.

Among the islands depending upon England, the characters of none are more worthy of notice than those of Jersey and Guernsey. The former is more warm and fertile, and slants towards the south;—the latter is poorer, and its grand declivity fronts the north. Jersey is more vain—Guernsey more proud. Both retain traces of their former French connection, particularly among the lower orders, but Jersey by much the most—both have acquired many characteristics of their modern British dependence—but Guernsey more than Jersey. Jersey is the France—Guernsey the England of these islands; and few countries unite so much affluence and prosperity to so large a stock of morals and simplicity as the latter.

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### PART III.

On the Reaction of the different Modifications of Government upon the Characters of Nations.

No human institution has so powerful an influence upon the characters of nations as that now under consideration. Though religion is more authoritative, government is more constantly present, and is perpetually giving its stamp to our whole disposition.

In the extreme provinces of one extensive empire, particularly if the greatest extent of that empire be from north to south, natural circumstances must differ essentially, and the disposition of the inhabitants must follow the same law. On the other hand, neighbouring nations, dwelling in districts not very dissimilar, ought not to differ much in character. Yet a greater diversity is frequently perceptible between the men who live contiguous on either side of a very narrow boundary, than between those who come from the extreme limits of the widest kingdom. The far



which separated the Athenians and the Spartans seemed to conduce more powerfully towards difference of mind than all the degrees of latitude which remove Pekin from Canton.

The powers which can so strongly affect so many millions of men, which can keep together such distinct and different regions as Chensi and Quantong, and separate the nations of the right and of the left banks of the Rhine, must be universal. It must act not merely on those who lie scattered along the circumference of empires, but on the far greater numbers that dwell condensed toward their centre. Laws may be partial ; religion may differ ; soil and climate may vary ; but in one nation there can be but one government. Government, then, is the power which, in fact, divides the world into nations ; and where this ends, not where a river runs, the minds and characters of empires have their real boundaries.

But, it may be said, if government is the result of character, and character a consequence of natural circumstances, whence comes it that the same form of government can be established in regions so different as the northern and the southern extremities of China, while so many more neighbouring countries never have been brought under the same rule ?

If it were proposed all at once to establish the same government in such a tract of land as China, the task might be impossible. But nations spread their principles as they grow, and the territory which they acquire imperceptibly adopts their habits. The union of all the parts of China was effected in ages of darkness ; and it is the most memorable instance in history of the power of government to assimilate the characters of very distant regions.

In the beginning of the Grecian states a greater similarity of character prevailed than was afterwards maintained ; and Athens differed more from Sparta, after Solon and Lycurgus had given such opposite constitutions to these republics, than it did when both were uncultivated. At this hour, too, the difference, perhaps, remains greater than it originally was ; for the Athenian and the Spartan are still distinguishable by some of the features which characterised

them in the most prosperous periods of their history. The difference of government first produced this effect, and recollections have continued it. Every province of Greece once submitted to this law, and, as each particular government was formed, assumed its own peculiar aspect in consequence of this influence. Successive conquests, which, one after the other, effacing the distinction of Theban, Corinthian, and Athenian, have brought the whole country under one uniform yoke, have allowed the assimilating power to act most largely; and to give one common badge to all the natives of the Peloponnesus and of Greece.

This same assimilating power may further be discerned in the countries of modern Europe. The moral type of each Italian state is more peculiar now than when all were under the Roman republic. In Germany, although some general dispositions prevail, each particular state has its separate characteristics; and it is easy to distinguish the Austrian from the Prussian, the Bohemian from the Saxon. The character peculiar to the French has spread over wider territories than formerly, in proportion as new provinces have become subject to their government; and Alsace, in about a century and a half, has lost much of its ancient character, and adopted much from France. Many of the high and noble feelings of Spain are lost on the borders of Portugal, where another nation begins. The difference which existed between Scotland and England has diminished since both parts of the island have been united; and, notwithstanding the reluctance of Ireland to bear dependence, the similarity of her government to that of England has given her also a similarity of character. It is by the assimilating power of government that the objections advanced by Mr. Hume, as mentioned in a former chapter, may be triumphantly answered.

The most general mode, then, in which government reacts upon the characters of nations, is by producing the uniform hue which distinguishes them; by annulling local differences, and effacing the peculiarities of accidental situations. But this power has its limits; and, if an attempt were made to bring to the same level the characters of the

Laplander and the Hindoo, by reducing both nations under the same government, it must fail. Every government applicable to large communities must be a *mezzo-terme* of all that might be adopted in each particular spot, were each spot to remain independent ; but where the extreme terms are infinitely different, no average can comprise them. This is the true ground on which nations may be said to have natural limits ; but those limits are moral, not physical. Had only the liberties of mankind been consulted, the political divisions of society would have been smaller. But security is another condition of national happiness ; and freedom has often been sacrificed to necessity or ambition.

The tendency of government is to react upon national character in the same direction as that in which natural circumstances first acted upon it. The disposition which created political institutions cannot but be strengthened by those very institutions ; and, wherever pride and civilisation have presided over their establishment, they must contribute to increase those qualities in the social mind. If, on the contrary, vanity and luxury have prescribed the form of rule, vanity and luxury will be fed by them ; and a vain nation becomes more vain—a proud nation more proud, by the reaction of all the institutions which it has adopted in conformity with its original disposition.

Despotism cannot be established on a basis of pride ; nor can the reaction of despotism fail to diminish it, even if it did exist in the mind of an oppressed people. The pageantry of the despot may, indeed, give them some vanity ; but even this modification of self-approbation must meet with many checks among his subjects.

In proportion as arbitrary government is mitigated, self-approbation may increase. But wherever the people do not legislate for themselves, and bear an active part in their own concerns, they cannot be proud of their constitution. In pure monarchy, vanity is the prevailing sentiment.

A monarch, like a despot, is surrounded by all the splendour of his nation. He is placed upon a throne which all admire, and his pomp is their glory. He is not absolute by right, but he becomes so by opinion. Whenever he

condescends to ask the advice of his subjects; their vanity is gratified by a deference, which, however, their pride would find but little satisfaction in bringing to the test. As much of the adulation paid to him is voluntary, a notion prevails that it might be withheld; and, in all things, the *suaviter in modo* disguises the *fortiter in re*.

Another source of vanity is the titles, dignities, and honors which a monarch can bestow. A despot has indeed the same power; but those which he confers he can revoke at pleasure, while, in a monarchy, they are hereditary. The interest of despotism is to level all below it; to have one single eminence, and all the rest a plain: the essence of a monarchy is to graduate society. Fear, too, which is the principle of despotism, cannot incline men very much even to the least elevated modification of self-approbation; while honor, the principle of monarchy, is most essentially the virtue of the vain.

As the sovereign power is divided among a number of persons, the excitement to vanity becomes less. The consciousness of strength gives dignity to the rulers and the people, and pride increases. Besides this, too, as Montesquieu has justly observed, moderation is the principle of aristocracy; and moderation is a virtue.

The proudest of governments is the republican. Virtue is its principle; not the virtue of a few, as in an aristocracy, but of the whole nation of those who are governed, as of those who govern; and, as society consists but of one order, no permanent dignities are admitted.

The only one of these modes of government whose essence it is to exist without mixture, is despotism. Were laws, or an aristocratical hierarchy, or the interference of the people admitted, it would no longer be a despotism. But the other modes may be blended together in infinite proportions; and their reaction upon national character is composed of the ascendancy which each of them bears in the established institutions. The most uniform character is found in despotic states; and the greatest variety, in countries where the constitution is formed by a union of the monarchical, the aristocratical, and the democratical modes of government.

The governments of all the empires of Asia were the result of vanity ; and none could more contribute to keep up that tendency than the institutions established there. The governing orders, as they received the abject adoration of their subjects, whom they hardly considered as men, felt more exultation than satisfaction ; nor could the governed have had a sentiment in which pride had a share. Natural circumstances were the first causes of vanity in the empires of the ancient East ; the governments which they introduced completed and strengthened the original bias.

The government of the Egyptians was more conducive to pride, and had many institutions which might, with reason, give satisfaction. The social system was more complete ; justice was better distributed ; the people were held in higher consideration ; and the intrinsic value of their form of rule could make them prouder than any Asiatic nation.

The perverseness of the Jews was such, that they contrived to draw from the very preference with which their divine ruler honored them, the opposite sentiment from that which it should have excited. They were vain of being under his special care ; and, blessed with every indulgence and gratification, they rebelled against the power that created them. Not even republicanism could make them free, or theocracy give them pride ; and they were base enough to demand that they might ‘ be governed as other nations were governed.’

Hitherto, no government had been combined with so much wisdom as in the republic of Athens ; and the intellectual satisfaction which it inspired principally created the mind of the city of Minerva. It gave the Athenians their mental activity, and increased the genius that made them preeminent in the embellishments which adorn society, and the civilisation which improves it. Had their original disposition, however, been more in analogy with their republican government ; or had some imperious necessity drilled them into conformity with it, its reaction would have been stronger, and led them farther in the disposition which such institutions create.

But the nation, whether ancient or modern, which received the most powerful impression from its government, was the Lacedæmonians. No laws ever made the task of citizen so arduous as those of Lycurgus. The difficulty, if not the value of compliance, was the cause of all the pride of Sparta. It began with the government of her legislator; it increased as that became consolidated; and it has ceased to exist since the expiration of his laws.

The republican spirit breathed in the commonest action of every Roman citizen, and heroes sprung from the plough in defence of liberty. But the decay of pride preceded the fall of the government, because that sentiment was not natural in a country of such fertility and luxury, and undermined her generous feelings before it entirely overthrew the edifice which had been erected upon them. As soon as her freedom had ceased to exist, she never knew a return of noble self-approbation; and neither liberty nor pride has appeared within her walls for eighteen centuries.

In proportion as the institutions of nations adhere to the dictates of nature, original disposition becomes more developed; and the characteristics, which at first may have been weak, are more forcibly delineated. The longer the harmony between primary and secondary causes has existed, the more inveterate it is; and the empires which have been the longest civilised are those in which its results are the most worthy of consideration. The kingdoms of modern Europe afford the surest information on this subject; and a strict comparison between the two most remarkable among them will sufficiently particularise the mode in which governments react upon the characters of nations.

The institutions of Britain were founded by pride; the government of France is the result of vanity. These nations have not derived a greater portion of their moral qualities directly from natural circumstances, than indirectly from the reaction of the governments which these have established.

The constitution of Britain has an older foundation than that of any European country which has continued uninterrupted, to be free. It may date from



which men held that independence and insubordination were liberty, and when hardly any nation had organised a social compact. This work has been accomplished by a perseverance never before shown in the pursuit of rational freedom. It has cost ten centuries of vigilance and toil, and the joint efforts of every class, through countless generations. The mode in which the British constitution was attained may, then, justly excite pride.

The government of France—such as it existed before the revolution of 1789—may boast of a still more ancient origin than the era of Alfred; and the monarchy was considered to be the oldest in Europe. But its forms had changed, and many of its institutions had become obliterated. As the power of the monarch had increased, and the authority of the national councils had fallen into disuse, the king might be vain of the willing submission of his subjects; but his subjects could feel no pride in any efforts which they made to resist him. The civil dissensions which distracted the country never had so grand a motive as liberty; and they brought on petty consequences. To pride they never could give rise; and, in generous minds, they would rather be a motive of shame.

Whatever was the pride of the Spartans at subduing all natural sentiments, that which the English feel at allowing them to exist must be nobler. The former arose from a difficulty overcome; the latter from a valuable end attained. The government of Lacedæmon required that, since men did not issue from the hands of the Creator exactly formed to live under his institutions, they should be violently bent to them; and a second nature was devised, to make room for which the first was expelled. But the English took the human being as he was, and framed their laws in likeness of his heart.

The assurance which every man in England possesses that no superior can injure him, gives to the lowest orders the pride of security. The possibility of raising himself above his humble condition without injury to any, and with advantage to all, diminishes the pain of dependence and the vanity of elevation. The exclusion of the French rupturiers

(*roturiers*, for history must find a word for this class when it speaks of other nations) from the order of nobility ; their little certainty of protection against superiors ; their holding as an indulgence what in England is a right—gave them abject feelings of their own condition : and the people in the former country are proud of their political acquirements ; in the latter, vain of having none but the paternal forbearance of the monarch.

In France the institution of nobility, one of the great sources of vanity in all monarchical states, almost preceded the hereditary right to the throne. The great vassals were independent of its authority, almost its equals in power, and absolute masters over their inferiors. The lesser vassals were much more subject to them than the great were subject to the crown ; and the people were the slaves of all. Yet, in the resistance of the great lords, there was less of right than of parade ; and the supreme law was force.

As the feudal system declined, the nobles retained their titles when their power was gone. They lost their former followers, and became mere servants of the crown, employed and recompensed by it. But they acquired no rights in compensation for what they had given up ; no political existence succeeded to their feudal tenure ; they did not become legislators ; nor did they take upon themselves the distribution of justice, the regulation of the public money, or the control of royal authority. Their existence was marked by no power, by no functions in the state, except an injurious exemption from certain public burdens, and the recollection of some absurd privileges, fortunately buried under the obsolete dust of antiquity.

The mere title of a French nobleman constituted no part of his rank, or even of his consideration. As many of the immediate vassals were counts, and as, under them, in fiefs and arrière fiefs, many noble vassals bore the same title, it was not possible to distinguish, by the appellation only, to what degree of vassalage they belonged. The Count de Rieux in Brittany were more respected than dukes of France ; and a descendant of baron Montmorency, though but a



youngest son of the youngest brother of the youngest branch, was held in higher estimation than any man, however loaded with the recent favors of his sovereign. One only title procured consideration as a title—a dukedom; yet, even in this class, all were not of equal value; and the prejudices of antiquity could not be effaced by any modern ennoblement. As to marquises, counts, barons, &c., nothing was more common than to find among them men who, in the French acceptance, were not gentlemen; that is to say, who could not prove that they had been noble before the day when prejudice had shut the entrance into the privileged class. A system of nobility which derived its whole existence from antiquity; which the king himself could not alter or increase; which eternally excluded all those whom, four centuries before, it did not comprehend; which was as much a caste as any in Hindostan, could have been gratifying but to vanity. But this sentiment was increased by the methods employed to support a dignity no longer real, and to conceal the true state of debility to which it had been reduced. From sovereign princes, which they once were, the nobles shrivelled up into courtiers, the dangles after kings, favorites, and ministers. One branch of employment they reserved to themselves—the least learned—the military; but the department of justice they disdained; and the nobility of the sword and of the robe were as different as the Brahmins and the Sooders. They also distinguished themselves by a certain tone and manner which they conceived it impossible for any but persons of the highest birth to attain; by many frivolous accomplishments, and by the futilities which they made the serious concerns of their existence. Skilful in supporting their factitious dignity with the keen hand of ridicule, dexterous in concealing the fallacy of their pretensions, they had made themselves the most ostentatious and the most inane of all the privileged classes of Europe; and they had reduced into a code, and put into practice, the whole philosophy of polished levity.

This body, whose misfortune it was not to have had the wisdom to make itself political when it ceased to be feudal, had address enough to win over a large portion of

public opinion to its side. In vain did the nation attempt to busy itself with its laws ; in vain did the financiers, by the ablest system of depredation in collecting and applying the public fortune, revenge themselves upon the nobility for the contempt in which they were held. Neither wealth nor talent could acquire right to participate in the direction of the kingdom, or were held so worthy to command a detachment of infantry as the thirtieth transmitter of some forgotten feudal right.

The nobility of Britain was nearly the reverse of this. When it saw its feudal power decline, it became a political body, more effective than it had ever been before, and acquired a third part of the tripartite authority of the empire. The constitution of this body, which, in proportion to the population of the respective countries, was to that of France as one to five hundred and thirty, is as little offensive to the natural rights of men as any hereditary aristocracy can be. Its members do not claim admission upon long vassalage, but upon wealth, birth, and talent. The king alone can confer this distinction ; and so many considerations control his choice, that the danger of abuse is remote. In a pure monarchy, the interest of the sovereign is to maintain an unchanging aristocracy ; in a constitutional monarchy, his interest is to create a variable nobility. Thus, if the honors of the British peerage do not, as the personal distinctions of the United States, revolve in the narrow circle of individuals, their rotation among generations is perpetual ; and the disappointed father may bequeath to his children the expectations which he himself could not realise.

While the nobility of England can boast of containing some families as ancient as any in Europe, it may make the better boast of possessing many whose origin was obscure. Many, too, were the artificers of their own elevation ; and the paths which lead into the House of Peers are as numerous as the departments into which the business of the nation naturally divides itself. It is not possible to conceive a happier system than is conveyed in this fact, or to imagine a wiser equality than that which puts upon the nobility the services performed by the commons.

diplomacy, in justice, at home or abroad, provided they are of equal worth. The preference allowed to the military nobility of France denoted an imperfect balance of the powers of the state, and was a remnant of the feudal system.

It is most satisfactory to see how large a portion of the British peers, created since the revolution of 1688, has been chosen among the men who administer justice. Happy indeed must that country be in which the professor that defends the subject without bloodshed is so highly esteemed. If, in ordinary times, greater deference be paid to one class of peers more than to another, it is to that which is the most adorned by intellect; and the solid partiality of the public mind is toward a chancellor, rather than toward a naval or military commander.

The great variety of employments by which the peerage may be attained; the preference shown to the learned profession; the functions which a British nobleman is called upon to fill, keep alive the activity of this body, and stimulate its industry. It has not time to abandon itself to frivolity; and, in proportion to its numbers, it must be second but to one for instruction and integrity. The brilliant situation which peers enjoy, their rank and dignities, may, indeed, make some among them vainer than commoners, and their wealth may induce them to indulge in pleasure; but there cannot exist a privileged order with so many motives to be proud.

The only aristocracy in France was the exclusive class of four hundred thousand derivatives from feudal nobility. The financiers, the traitants, the farmers general, nay, the parliaments did not belong to it. But in England the gradations are infinite, and comprise every man who, not being a peer, has an adequate stake in the country. Of this body, which has nothing analogous in Europe, and which is, in fact, the floating aristocracy of the realm, the House of Commons is the chosen representative; and many have thought it more honourable than that which holds a higher rank.

The exorbitant number of titled persons, considering

themselves as nobility, was not the only thing in the institutions of France which contributed to the vanity of the higher orders. Stars, ribbons, orders of knighthood were so prodigally bestowed, that they ceased to be an honor, or even a distinction. When Edward III. of England created the Order of the Garter, the number was less than thirty; and it has not since been increased. John of France, in imitation of this, created the Order of the Star; but, that he might outdo his rival, he named five hundred knights, and thus brought the institution into such disrepute, that no gentleman would belong to it, and it was soon given up to the Chevaliers du Guet of Paris. At another time, the Duc de Guise made such numerous distributions of the Order of St. Michel, instituted by Louis XI., that its original intention was entirely lost. The Order of St. Louis is said to have contributed much to the successes of Louis XIV.; but it afterwards became so common as to denote little more than that the wearer of its insignia had served as an officer during a certain number of years. One of the first consequences of the late revolution of France was to annul every title and order of knighthood, and to excite the most bloody reaction against the persons who had been distinguished by them; but, when fallen under a military government, the ambitious chief established his Legion of Honor, so numerous, that to be admitted was no longer a favor, though to be forgotten was a disgrace. This attempt was followed by a new creation of hereditary nobility, which was merely a list of counts, viscounts, barons, &c., who had not either a feudal or a political existence, and who possessed neither the real stake of property nor the ideal one of birth. At the restoration the ancient nobility was reinstated; the new was preserved; the former order of knighthood was restored; the Legion of Honor was maintained; and that very revolution which began by abolishing personal distinctions and declaring all men equal, terminated by creating a more numerous nobility and a more defective order than that which it had just abolished, and more than doubled the inequality which had been one of its pretexts. The old nobility maintained itself by prejudices; the new

was established upon a more perverse basis, and neither the one nor the other was conceived in the true spirit of policy. The former, once feudal, had ceased to be so; the latter was merely ideal, and their union is neither feudal, political, nor aristocratical.

The nobility and the various orders of knighthood long maintained their purity and their respectability in England. Some late innovations, however, occasioned by the unprecedented successes of the country, were not in the true spirit of the national character. Had the persons who imagined them fathomed the hearts where pride has so firm a hold, they never would have admitted the mummeries which are suited only to vanity.

The sentiment usually felt by men who are very much raised above the common level of society, is not pride; and the pomp and splendour with which sovereigns are surrounded are alone sufficient to incline them to vanity. Among the monarchs of Europe, none, perhaps, had stronger motives to be vain than the king of France; and certainly none has such reason to be proud as the king of Great Britain.

The absolute power which the former possessed over so brilliant a population, and so rich a territory—such armies, so easily levied and so disposed to war—such natural resources, and such artificial accomplishments—the adulation and splendour with which he was surrounded—the whole state of society in his court and country—were the intoxicating motives which must have given him a higher idea of his own magnificence than monarchs generally can have. But they could not have inspired more elevated sentiments; and, if ever he reflected, he must have found that all the wonders which his subjects attributed to him, consisted more in ostentation than reality.

The king of England is not moved by such thoughts as these; and, without the approbation of his conscience, he may have little reason to be gratified with royalty. If, indeed, he contemplates the solid happiness and prosperity over which he reigns—the wealth, power, and resources which his subjects are ready to confide into his hands—the talents, wisdom, and integrity with which his throne is sur-

rounded—it is difficult to conceive that, in monarchy, there can be a second position like to his ; and the pride which he may feel is unknown among sovereigns.

If any government now existing can inspire its subjects with so much pride as the British, it is that of the United States of America, from which all that is depressing in hereditary distinctions is banished ; but, on the other hand, the thought was not indigenous, nor was the constitution established by native wisdom and virtue, or won by long and difficult exertions.

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#### PART IV.

On Revolutions ; and on this Question—Whether Nations can, or cannot be educated to Liberty ?

THE question, How far it may be expedient for a nation to change the form of government which has taken root there, is one of the most important which can be proposed for investigation. In the present age, too, it becomes doubly interesting, as a general impatience of established rule is a leading characteristic in the two most civilised continents of the world.

From all that precedes, it is evident that, in order to accomplish such an end, it is indispensable to alter the natural situation and circumstances in which a nation dwells—to make a warm climate cold, a fertile country barren—to render difficult what was easy, and thus to convert vanity into pride, luxury into civilisation, imaginative religion into piety, and conventional morality into virtue. When these impossibilities are accomplished, a free government may suddenly rise out of the ruins of despotism.

But, it may be said, if nations are unchangeable, whence comes it that individuals can be educated ? for every day brings proof that men, forgetting the customs of their paternal soil, imperceptibly adopt the habits and character of the country in which they reside. A native of the most

opposite regions, carried at an unconscious age into England, may, if not impeded by some peculiarities of physical constitution, imbibe an English mind; as a native of England, transplanted in the same manner to another country, may lose some features of his character. But nations cannot thus withdraw themselves from the universal action of soil, climate, and prosperity. All that they can do is, to improve the bias which has been given to them by natural circumstances.

It has sometimes been proposed to introduce into one country the habits and institutions which have succeeded in another; to the vices of the vain and the luxurious, for instance, to apply a remedy borrowed from the proud and the civilised—to establish a second nature more powerful than the first, and thus to counteract all prior influences; but the projectors of such schemes have supposed that immoveable aggregates of men may be fashioned like individuals. They forget that human faculties have no active existence till roused into exertion, and that the most imperious mover is necessity. They imagine that, if a nation were permitted to live as if they were wise, and virtuous, and proud, they would become so, and grow to the opinion which is generously lent to them.

A common mistake among political philosophers is, to consider government immediately as a cause, without ever having reflected that it is previously an effect, of national character. They seem to imagine, that the compacts by which nations are ruled have no source among men, and that systems of internal policy, instead of being devised by the persons who live under them, are bestowed, along with existence, upon nations.

Another maxim, too, is, that if heaven sent princes, an absolute monarchy would be the best of governments; but why not carry the hypothesis still farther, and say, if heaven sent subjects, a complete democracy would be the best of governments? Both suppositions are, in fact, equally extravagant. Heaven does not expressly make either princes or subjects; and as long as the nature of human creatures is composed of good and evil, in variable proportions, the best

government in practice will be that which encourages the one and represses the other, in exact proportion to the exigencies of the case.

Government being but the application of restraint to human passions, can have no abstract beauty. All its merit consists in its suitableness to the men to whom it is applied. The remark of Tacitus\* upon his countrymen under the first Roman emperors, that they could not bear either entire oppression or entire liberty (*nec totam servitutem nec totam libertatem pati possunt*), is the motto of the whole human race. No nation ever yet could endure total slavery or total freedom. Legislators should know, that the mixed natures of human beings forbid such extremes; they should know, too, that, as the perfection of government depends upon the perfection of men, the first step toward establishing the former is to improve the latter, and to inspire them with a love of virtue and wisdom.

Revolutions are rarely conducted by philosophy, and the greater number furnish examples of calamities and vices far exceeding the good which they have produced. Liberty has seldom sprung from sudden changes—she owes her growth to patient sagacity, her maturity to ages, and her preservation to perpetual anxiety. It is not enough for men to say, ‘Let us be free.’ No freedom will be elicited by this exclamation—no will of theirs can fit them for that which only wisdom can secure, or supply the place of moral energy, to maintain so complicated a system as that which good government supposes.

A period of insurrection deserves peculiar study, as the true touchstone of national character—the season when all the qualities of men may be the most fairly judged. It is the interregnum of law, and the saturnalia of passion. Established rules of right and wrong are subverted—usual ideas of infamy and honor are suspended—punishments cease to be disgraceful—rewards are no longer dignified.

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The principles of yesterday become the prejudices of to-day, and the doctrines of this moment are abjured as monstrous errors on the next. It is then that men seek rather to show than to conceal themselves, and, were they not to do so, the madness of the times would drag them into notoriety.

Would we form an early opinion upon the success of any attempt to acquire liberty, we should first ask, what the condition of the nation was before it became a candidate for that noble prize—whether its general inclination had been toward vice or virtue—whether its wisdom had been more true or false, more practical or speculative—whether it was more civilised or luxurious, more proud or vain ;—we should inquire how great was the change which it proposed to make, and by what means ;—we should examine whether it has gained or abjured any virtues or vices—acquired new knowledge, or corrected old errors—whether the revolution be really and sincerely the work of the whole population, or whether it be brought about by a few, who clamour till they make the multitude believe that the nation demands a reform.

The most seducing shape in which a project of reform can present itself is, when it comes preceded by a parade of general principles, to the abstract truth of which no reasonable objection can be made. These are the easy fruits of meditative wisdom ; and the heads of many philosophers have teemed with systems which the world has chilled, and will for ever chill. Calamities always follow the crude conceptions of visionary politicians ; but the most dreadful of all is, when the speculative science of a few men, assuming the mask of philanthropy, makes its appeal to the passions of an ignorant multitude.

Well might the chancellor Oxenstiern exclaim, *Quam parvū sapientiā regitur mundus!* yet never is the world in greater peril than when it falls into the hands of philosophers. Men who have studied Nature in her most hidden mysteries, and found harmony in all, are the most disposed to indulge in projects of perfectibility. Occupied with beings whose essence is invariable, whose very irregularities are subject to known laws, they imagine that the being endowed with thought is more easy to be governed than they are ;

but the creature of reason is also the creature of passion ; and this element, new in their calculations, puts to flight at once the baseless vision of their impracticable benevolence.

The science of politics is delusive. We are all governed, and all think we could govern ; yet we never reflect how hard is the task of those who rule mankind. We are astonished, too, at the opposite results which struggles for liberty have had in different nations, and forget that revolutions take their complexion, as government does, from the character of the people among whom they happen. On the one side we see failure—on the other, success, and attribute both to accident ; but the final issue of a revolution is the test of its goodness, and this is one of the few cases where merit must be measured by success.

As nothing more fortunate can happen in politics than the liberation of a people worthy to be free, so nothing more disastrous can occur than the interference of a bad and foolish nation in the sacred cause of liberty. The former gives an example to the world of what men ought to do—the latter brings freedom herself into disrepute, and is a terror to the wise and good, who are too timid to depend upon their own strength and firmness, and too just to risk the lives of millions in a cause which may not succeed.

Revolutions are either foreign or domestic ; their object may be independence or liberty—to shake off the yoke imposed upon one nation by another, or by its own rulers. A few revolutions also have had in view both independence and liberty. Among the former may be reckoned the Portuguese insurrection against the Spanish yoke, in 1640, which placed the house of Braganza on the throne. Among the latter is the Roman revolution, by which the Tarquins were expelled ; as also two revolutions in England—one against Charles I., another against James II. The revolution of Switzerland against the house of Austria, in 1308, was undertaken both for independence and liberty ; but the American revolution of 1774 is the most remarkable which ever has occurred, for it has accomplished, on the largest scale, both independence and liberty.

The Portuguese had been sixty years under the domi-

nion of the Spaniards, when a conspiracy was formed to recover their independence. The nation had been oppressed by Philip II., and still more by his successors ; nevertheless the forms of government had been little changed ; and as the difference between Portuguese and Spanish liberty was not great,—the grievance was not despotism, but despotism administered by a foreign hand. The nation had more reason to complain than the subject ; but the wrongs of both at length put arms in the hands of the citizens, and the country was delivered.

The conspiracy was conducted with the utmost secrecy and prudence. Although more than five hundred persons were acquainted with it during several months, it was not betrayed, and it was executed with admirable moderation. Very few, even of the lowest class, perished, and but two of the principals, who were particularly obnoxious. The whole transaction was terminated in a few hours, and with so much tranquillity, that the inhabitants of Lisbon could not persuade themselves that anything extraordinary had occurred.

The symptoms of this revolution were most favorable, and its end was fully accomplished. Its principal characteristic was moderation—the wisdom which knows exactly where it ought to stop ; but if the Portuguese had attempted to assert their freedom, not only that undertaking, but even the attempt at independence, might have failed. As far as they went, the spirit of the nation accompanied them ; but had they gone beyond it, they would have been deserted, and the Spaniards might have found many a breach in their disunion, to procure an entrance.

The revolution of Rome was of a different nature, and offers a much wider field for contemplation. A greater variety of interests makes its study more complicated, and it was the forerunner of stupendous destinies.

The Romans, during their monarchy, had no fixed rule of succession to the throne. Both election and descent were titles to it, but neither of them regularly ; and some of the kings were more than suspected of having murdered their predecessors. Such a state of things, in an infant people,

denoted more ignorance than vice; while the frequent excesses of the prætorian guards, who put to death one emperor after another, marked an age of vicious decrepitude. Thus it is that the first and the last stages of society may be stained with similar crimes, while the circumstances which attend them are the characteristics of a different condition of public morality.

Had the succession to the crown been settled by any fixed rule, illicit hopes of acquiring it would have been destroyed, and the crimes which they produced would never have existed. A greater portion of intrigue and immorality was seated on or near the throne than in any other part of the community; and there was no alternative but that the nation should sink under its example, or rise superior to its depravity. The people ordained the latter course; and the existence of one man, who had long been indignant at the crimes of the Tarquins, seconded their intentions, as one of those happy accidents that come to assist an event which they could not have caused.

The crime of Sextus awakened the dormant virtue of the Roman people; Brutus favored their fury; but had there been no virtue among them, the son of Tarquin might have been a ravisher with impunity: neither would Brutus have been what he was, had he not received his education from the time in which he lived. The oath which he proposed with the reeking poniard of Lucretia in his hand, would never have been accomplished, had not the people shared the same spirit as himself; and through them he imparted to the revolution, and to the whole subsequent history of the republic, the austerity by which they were characterised.

The great leader of this event did not corrupt the liberty of his country by any acts of cruelty. When the news of the insurrection reached the camp, Tarquin flew to Rome, in the hope of putting an end to it at once, but he found the gates of the city shut against him. He then returned to his soldiers, but they had embraced the cause of the republic. Nothing would have been more easy than to have murdered the king, but the spirit of the Romans was such—they were so unani-

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mous and so great, that they had nothing to apprehend from his existence ; and his absence, not his death, was necessary. The senate passed a decree, by which his whole family was exiled, and allowed to wander, without persecution, wherever they pleased, beyond the Roman boundaries. Not one of them suffered by the executioner ; but as no human action is quite exempt from blame, the innocent and injured husband of Lucretia shared the fate of his guilty relations, and was banished. This act of severity, however, would have been indulgence in the generality of revolutions ; and it was mitigated by the present which the republic made him of twenty talents, to which Brutus added five out of his own private fortune.

The hands of Brutus, however, were not always to remain unimbued with blood, and the severest trial was reserved for him. The punishment of men, who, in the very heart of Rome, conspired to place the tyrant on his throne again, was an indispensable act of public justice. If the nascent republic had not shown its internal enemies that to plot its destruction was dangerous, the profligate adherents of the court would not have ceased their intrigues. The office of consul imposed upon Brutus the dispensation of justice, and the first criminals brought before him were his own sons. Had these men not been his sons, his duty undoubtedly was to condemn them. Nothing, however, would have been more easy than to have found excuses to save them. He might have absented himself from the seat of judgment, and left his colleague to pronounce a milder sentence ; but the republic would have begun by favoritism and partiality : or he might have yielded to the voice of the people, who cried out for banishment ; but then he would not have fulfilled his duty to Rome : or he might have listened to his colleague Collatinus, who shed tears at the fate of his nephews involved in the same condemnation ; but this would have been weakness. In every point of view he owed the lives of his sons to the republic, and if he had pardoned them he would have betrayed the trust reposed in him. A great example was necessary to strike terror into the minds of the royalists ; and it fell to his lot to set the example, or else to risk the fruit of all his former labours.

Could ambition be laid to the charge of this Roman, then indeed the condemnation of his sons would have been atrocious; but no such accusation can be made. Had he wished to be chosen king of Rome, his conduct would be like that of other monarchs, who have sacrificed their children to their ambition; but such was not the spirit of the stern patriot. He gave his countrymen a terrible example of republican virtue, and taught them by what sacrifices a free and popular government must be maintained. To this action of his may be traced the many instances of devotedness which occurred during the commonwealth, and the long succession of acts which contributed not a little to its maintenance.

When the revolution was completed, and the republic fully established, a last effort on the part of the Tarquins engendered a conspiracy of slaves to murder the senators, and to deliver up the town to the royal faction. A dreadful execution ensued, marked by a ferocity and treachery not to be excused: and this is the greatest stain which the expulsion of monarchy has put upon the Roman name.

No change of government ever more fully accomplished its purpose than the present. It began with the destruction of the regal constitution, and every subject co-operated in it. Its success was complete, and proportioned to the means which it employed.

Had the men who, from Gracchus to Augustus, attacked the liberties of Rome, lived in other times—had they not seen that the whole country was precipitating itself into bondage, they might have been as virtuous as their ancestors, and Cæsar might have been a Brutus. It was not they who caused the perversion or the slavery of Rome; they did but join in the corruption which existed; and had they been opposed by citizens like those who lived in the time of Publicola, they would have been compelled to pull down in a night the insolent structures which they were erecting against freedom.

The massacres which took place during the contests between Marius and Sylla completed the demoralisation of Rome, and hastened on the destruction of what little virtue had escaped the regular decline.

succeeded the lenity of Cæsar, but still the Romans followed the temper of one single man. As bad a symptom as a nation can manifest is, to become susceptible of taking the tone of its mind from individual examples. Its own spirit then is gone—its qualities no longer proceed from principles, and all its actions depend upon fashion. The corruptive suavity of Cæsar did more to undermine the morals of his country, than the cruelty of Sylla. He, indeed, was the most tremendous enemy with whom national virtue ever had to cope, for by his great and brilliant talents he dazzled his fellow-citizens. He charmed them by his military glory—he won them by his clemency, and many who hated his tyranny, not only admired the dictator, but became attached to his person.

The state of public virtue at this period was the reverse of what it was at the time of the elder Brutus. Then the opponents of liberty were few and easily subdued, and though Lucretia or Brutus never had existed, an enterprise in its favor must soon have been formed; but four centuries and a half had so changed the nation, that it waited but for an enslaver, and, had Nature sent no Sylla or no Cæsar, it would have created one, for corruption always engenders the creatures that can live in it. A very small number of men who had escaped the contagion conspired for liberty, and were not more successful than the Etrurian ambassadors, or the slaves who had conspired against it at a former era.

The few men who still breathed the ancient spirit of the nation, resolved to make a last effort to retrieve their rights; but in the whole republic one thousand persons could not have been found worthy of liberty. Brutus, Cassius, &c. wanted the discernment to see that, amid so much depravity, freedom must be a hopeless cause. They deserve to be applauded for their virtue, but there was a deficiency of wisdom in not appreciating the true state of Roman morality. The latter Brutus may have been as virtuous as his predecessor of the same name, but the elder Brutus made a juster estimate of the time in which he lived.

In the former revolution, the tyrant was banished, and this precaution proved sufficient; in the latter revolution,

the depravity of the fallen republic made the death of Cæsar necessary. To send into exile a man who had at his command such armies, so devoted to his person, and spread over every Roman province, would have been to send him to immediate victory, or, at the least, to have confided the enterprise to the doubtful issue of a civil war; but the existence of such armies devoted to their leader, instead of being attached to the republic, was a vice in the state. When the monarchy was subverted, the citizens were the armies, and the soldiers were citizens, and all the forces which Tarquin could collect were not sufficient to oppose them; but the soldiers of Cæsar had long been separated from the people, and owned no authority but military discipline and their general. The only chance in such circumstances was the death of the chief, and even then his army might remain more attached to his memory, than to the men by whom he was murdered.

When revolutions, the first act of which was the death of the tyrant, have succeeded, their object was not so much to recover liberty as to destroy an oppressor or a usurper, and to transfer authority from one hand to another. No more national virtue is required for such a change than is compatible with assassination. In the empire, for instance, many of the revolutions, for such they truly were with regard to the throne, were effected by the murder of the reigning emperor, but not one of them aimed at the effectual suppression of despotism.

It is not out of any superstitious respect for the divine right of sovereigns to impunity that this doctrine is here held, but from a conviction that such are the results which must ensue from the general construction of human society. The lives of men are not of equal value to the world, though murder must be equally punished. The greater the portion of society which derives its well-being from any one person, the more that person is to be valued, and a monarch is the great pivot upon which the machine of government principally rests.

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Certainly not by assassination. If, with the mockery of a trial, he is dragged before his own subjects to be judged, he has not the advantage of that impartiality which the lowest of these is sure to find from a jury of his peers. He has no peers, unless it be the sovereigns of other nations, and they could never swear with a safe conscience to pronounce sentence without hope or fear. If the condition of equality be overlooked, how is a nation to be so divided as to afford accusers, witnesses, and judges? And would not every class into which society can be separated, be too deeply interested in the life of a monarch, to be impartial. Surely the subjects of another country are still more unfit to pronounce sentence; for they are too indifferent or too deeply interested to render justice. The impossibility of finding judges who stand, with regard to kings, in the same predicament as a jury does to a fellow-citizen, makes their trial juridical assassination; and the revolution which spares itself such an act, may expect a better issue than if it had begun with murder.

If, indeed, there could exist a tribunal as competent to try a monarch as a common jury is to decide upon the fate of a subject; if he could be judged for some breach of faith foreseen by the law, and the penalty of which had been previously fixed; then, indeed, the trial of a king would be an awful instance of public justice. It would show that the most exalted of mortals was amenable to human laws, without violence or passion; and it would indicate a state of society inferior to that only in which pure republicanism can exist.

But, independently of these reasons, it is probable that a nation, whose sovereign has been allowed to commit acts which merit death, is not itself very capable of freedom. Nations are responsible for their governments, and they that cannot answer for them are still more culpable, as they are exempted only by the despotism under which they live; and the excuse is worse than the fault. In either case the monarch may be murdered; but in both the people are unworthy and incapable of liberty.

For these reasons the expulsion of Tarquin was more



efficacious than the death of Cæsar; and the men who undertook the latter revolution, well knew that the tyrant could not be allowed to survive; but they were far from foreseeing the consequences of that necessity. They might have lived under a popular government, but the Roman people could not. Their party was overthrown,—not by Antony, or Octavius, but because they lived at a time when the pressure of political difficulties had ceased to make reflection and self-command necessary; and when the influence of natural circumstances had recovered its empire over the Roman character.

The various attempts which were made since that period to recover liberty, deserve to be considered in no better light than as the schemes of madmen. Some of the individuals engaged in them, indeed, deserved a better fate; but their single virtue could not alter the condition of the state.

The revolutions which have happened in England are still more instructive than those of Roman history, because they occurred in a more advanced state of society; when all the departments of social improvement had made maturer progress, and the faculties of men were more extensively developed. They comprise a greater number of civilised interests, and show a larger variety of passion and of reason.

In Sparta, freedom was the work of one single operation. In Rome, it sprung out of the fortunes of the state, and grew along with them. In America, it was introduced by strangers with new inhabitants, and they prospered together. In England, it was planted many centuries since, in as imperfect a condition as was to be expected, from the ignorance of the times; but every generation has struggled for it, and there has hardly been an interval in which public anxiety has slumbered since the period of Alfred. Its progress has been slow, because this nation had everything to discover—the nature of man to study—and systems of counterpoises to invent; but it has approached nearer to perfection than elsewhere, because it has been gradual, and rarely attempted to outstrip the march of time.

When the religious revolution of England was completed, men turned their thoughts to the discussion of politics, and



happy was it for Britons that they were wise enough not to attempt the reformation of both by one single operation. So great a convulsion as a total change in the two most important of national concerns, would have been too much for any empire to have withstood. It is fortunate, too, that religion had the precedency, for had catholicism continued, it is probable that so free a government as that which has been found to suit the temper of the English, could not have subsisted. If the religious and the political revolutions of this country had been undertaken together, both might have failed.

After the Reformation, the progress of knowledge was rapid and general ; and Henry was no sooner in his grave, his bigoted daughter had no sooner ceased her bloody reign, than the effect was felt. An uneasy symptom for Elizabeth was the eagerness with which the study of the law was prosecuted ;—the study the most dangerous for despotism. So great a progress as the political sciences made in the course of her reign and that of James, is not to be found in the history of the human mind ; and it is fortunate, perhaps, for her claim to the love and admiration of Britain, that she died before its effects had manifested themselves too strongly.

Although the disputes which arose under James were religious as well as political, the mind of the nation was made up on the former subject, and it would have been difficult to produce a retrocession. Protestantism was invariably fixed ; and more was to be feared from an excess of zeal, than from a relapse into papistry. But his parliaments gave him much trouble and opposition when they asserted their right of settling their internal regulations ; of interposing their counsel in the concerns of government ; and when they claimed full freedom of debate ; declaring that ‘ their liberties, franchises, privileges, and jurisdictions ‘ were the ancient and undoubted birthright and inheritance ‘ of the subjects of England.’ These were the schools in which the principles of liberty were canvassed ; and it is difficult to conceive a greater change than was happily produced in the minds of all British subjects during the two years of his reign.

The consequence of all this was, that, on the accession of Charles, the parliament put forward a bold and vigorous assertion of the general principles claimed under his father. They stated their grievances, and demanded redress; and, when one of their best privileges was infringed by the imprisonment of two of their body, they declared they would not proceed to business until their colleagues were liberated. A succession of arbitrary acts brought on the most spirited and eloquent debates, the issue of which was the petition of right; a remarkable monument of national moderation and wisdom. It was not a protest of insurrection from a lawless populace against an indulgent monarch; but a firm declaration that the people had resolved to claim the exercise of all the rights and prerogatives which were theirs from time immemorial; the practice of which, indeed, they had allowed to be suspended, but which they were now determined and able to maintain. ‘We vindicate—what?’ exclaimed Sir Thomas Wentworth; ‘new things? no:—our ancient legal and vital liberties, by reinforcing the laws enacted by our ancestors; by setting such a stamp upon them, that no licentious spirit shall henceforth dare to invade them.’

But, even if anything new had been claimed, the parliament and the nation would have done well to assert it, if good. Innovation is wrong only when it is absurd or wicked. It is by successive innovations that the world stands where it now does; and every nation that can do so advantageously has a right to innovate. Although England had slumbered, she could rouse herself when she pleased: and, though she had borne still greater wrongs under the house of Tudor, the Stuarts had no reason to oppose her regeneration. Formerly, Englishmen could bear unjust actions; now, an unjust principle made them indignant: and happy is it for nations when their disputes are about principles. The most successful attempts for freedom always must be those which are undertaken, not against tyrannical actions, but in support of honest sentiments. Not one of the Stuarts was more despotically inclined than Elizabeth. But the ratio between ~~what the nation could endure, and what the sovereign dared~~

to inflict, had been altered. The country in which such a trial as that of Hampden could take place, need not despair of freedom; for, if the public mind had not been in his favor—though the judges pronounced sentence against him—he must have perished.

In the long parliament the first evils of the effervescence showed themselves, and the contest became impassioned. The condemnation of Stafford too fully proved that faction had taken the lead. The king has been blamed for giving up this faithful counsellor to his sentence; but it was no longer in his power to protect him. Nothing less than raising the royal standard, as was afterwards done at Nottingham, could have been effectual in his favor.

From the death of Stafford everything proceeded with fury and violence; and the pretensions of the parliament became such, that it was impossible for any regular government to admit them. The revolution had changed its entire complexion;—its professions and its actions were at variance; and fanaticism became the veil to cover political excesses. The Presbyterians had already begun their levelling system; and the North, having set the example of abolishing prelacy, proposed the solemn league and covenant to the South. But the enthusiasts of England went still further, and rejected all ecclesiastical government whatsoever. Such a system of religion accorded with the spirit of the revolution; and its most zealous promoter was also the greatest enemy to monarchy. By the change which Cromwell and Fairfax had brought about in the army, both officers and soldiers were converted into fanatics, and rushed on to battle as to holy martyrdom. After various successes in arms, and many sanguinary contests, the king, who had always shown much personal bravery, was beheaded.

The wishes of all the revolutionary factions, whether roundheads, presbyterians, covenanters, or independents—whether enlisted under the banners of the parliament or of the army, tended to one object—the establishment of a republic; but as the independents finished by absorbing all the rest, the death of the king may be principally laid to their charge. It was, however, nothing more than might

have been expected from the men who had executed Stafford.

The murder of Charles unites a variety of circumstances, clearly denoting that the disturbances, of which it was a part, could not be followed by good consequences. Little did the early assertors of parliamentary prerogative foresee that, in thirty years, the monarch would be stripped, not only of all that was guaranteed to him by the very constitution which they were defending, but even of life; and that the return to former principles would pass through such disastrous trials as those which were preparing for it. However free this revolution was from the trammels which Catholic bigotry opposes to the progress of liberty, it was unfortunately impelled beyond its orbit by another species of fanaticism, without which the reformers would probably have stopped when they had attained the just degree of freedom suited to the nation. But experience was yet to be bought.

No tribunal in the nation could try King Charles: but none could be less competent than the parliament, after it had been reduced by what is called Pride's purge. It then was but a mutilated representative of the nation,—a body which, even in its full vigour, had never been entrusted with the right of condemning the sovereign, and to whom its constituents had not at any time confided the sword of justice. It never had been commissioned to assume all the functions of the state, even when it contained the strength and wisdom of all its members. No act of reason could now be expected from it; and the submission of the nation was a melancholy proof of depravity. The lamentations of the people—their sorrow at the death of the king, cannot efface the blame which is attached to the toleration of injustice; and the crime of regicide is shared, only in different degrees, by those who committed, and by those who did not prevent the deed.

No act of the king's,—not even the sum of all his acts, deserved death, unless the mere exercise of royal authority can be held criminal. It is true, he bore arms against his subjects; but his subjects first bore arms against him. He

was insincere, too ; but it is not easy for a sovereign, or for any other man, to co-operate sincerely with his spoilers. He certainly did oppose the just wishes of his people ; and if his people had cashiered him they would have acted properly. But his death was necessary only to republicanism, and to the fanatical faction which wanted to reign in his place. His virtues were so much greater, his vices so much less than those of many monarchs whom adulation has represented as models of perfection, that no comparison can be made between them. Sylla died almost beloved, and Cæsar was stabbed at the foot of Pompey's statue. The capricious Henry, sometimes gloomy, sometimes sportive, sometimes austere, sometimes relaxed, but never tolerating any mood which he did not share at the moment—notwithstanding his alternate dissimulation and violence, is still admired by some who think the death of the gentle Charles an act of justice. The temper of the times pronounces sentence on the merits and demerits of sovereigns ; and after ages, too, often find it easier to repeat their judgments, than to inquire into the motives which influenced them.

The principal agent in this unwarrantable execution assumed the place of the king ; and, as, may be expected, committed more acts of outrageous despotism than the victim had ever thought of performing. But as he caused the nation to be dreaded by her foreign enemies, and raised the British name to a high pitch of glory, he found grace in the eyes of those who can bear with tyranny when it comes from the people or their demagogues. Cromwell, however, was not sanguinary. He was a strange mixture of religious enthusiasm and political dissimulation ; and, powerful as he was, even though the nation submitted to him, he did not find it so easy as he at first expected to carry every point by his protectoral authority.

The factions into whose hands the claims of the people devolved, acted as small factions do, and each pursued a separate interest. But the system proposed, even by the most moderate of those who contributed to the murder of the king, was not applicable to the English nation. The British people could maintain their rights under the control

and guidance of a limited monarchy ; but they were not in a condition to bear that every part of the government should be put into their own hands ; and that, in the room of a king who was not one of themselves, a magistrate, chosen from their own body, should be substituted ; neither did they as yet perceive their incapacity.

As long as Cromwell lived, he reigned with little opposition ; but liberty was more remote than ever. Privilege and prerogative were buried in the tombs of the Stuarts. The petition of right was with the dead. On the ruins of the throne and of the church, of the nobles and of the people, sat the man who had usurped the powers of every estate ; who, uniting in his strong hand all the resources of the nation, made the British more formidable abroad, and more miserable at home ; who forced the Dutch republic to bow before his flag, and sold the natives of his realms as slaves to his American planters.

Independently of the murder of the king, no very great national crimes had stained this revolution. It was not accompanied by any such atrocious massacres as occurred in the political disturbances of other countries. Although Cromwell himself was a profound dissembler, no great act of national perfidy took place. Religion was not rooted out of the hearts of the people to make room for impiety ; and fanaticism, not atheism, caused the abuses of the time ; still leaving a hope that, when the frenzy was calmed, the name of God might be again respected. Morality, instead of being openly relaxed, affected austerity ; and they who despised it were compelled to use hypocrisy. In short, none of the tremendous vices which threaten the very foundations of society broke out among the people, to destroy the hope of ever re-establishing good order.

At the Restoration the commons did not relinquish any of their original demands, but brought them forward again with perseverance and moderation. They might have exacted almost any restrictions, yet they maintained a happy medium between royal prerogative and popular licentiousness. Experience had taught them to be reasonable, and to see the folly of republicanism in their case. They allowed

the king an ample provision both of power and money ; but they steadily opposed him whenever they perceived that his measures were hostile to liberty.

The return of Charles II. was not followed by any wanton reactions. The regicides were punished, and justly. There are crimes which no human society can pardon, unless it chooses to declare itself an accomplice. At a later period, indeed, greater severity was used ; and upon the whole, it may create surprise that the nation which had gone to such extremities with his father, could tolerate so much from him. His foreign wars and alliances were contrary to the wishes, the interests, and the honor of his country ; and his domestic government was in opposition to their liberty, their religion, and their morals. Never was venality carried to such a height in an independent kingdom ; yet the Habeas Corpus Act was passed during this reign, as if the nation was resolved to give immortal proofs of the moral and political contradictions which chequered this period of contention. Whenever the king, whose morals had been relaxed by a long residence in the corrupted courts of the continent, prevailed, the affairs of the nation declined ; when the partisans of freedom took the lead, wiser measures were adopted. The temper of the people in 1667, may be judged of by the sentence pronounced against Clarendon, which was banishment—not death, as against Stafford, in 1641. On the other hand, the disposition of the king may be learned from the fates of Russel and of Sidney.

It was fortunate for the English nation that James II. attempted to carry his high notions of royalty with bare-faced violence ; for, had he been an artful and insidious politician, he might, perhaps, have succeeded in establishing many of his religious and political principles. But his first speech to parliament disclosed his entire disposition. Rebellions broke out, which were defeated, and their promoters were severely punished. The king left no effort untried to bring back the exploded religion ; but his bigotry and his tyranny drove him from his throne and country, and the liberties of Britain were consolidated by his expulsion.



The discussions which took place in parliament during this reign, had a character of maturity unknown before, and foretold a speedy and fortunate deliverance. National forbearance was extreme; and, had it not been for the happy issue of the contest, might have passed for pusillanimity. The moderation with which this second and final revolution was conducted, raises it to a level with that which expelled the Tarquins; but, in point of wisdom, it far exceeded everything of its kind which had yet occurred. It was the happy crowning of nearly one century, passed in labour and contention, in misfortunes and sacrifices, in the study and discussion of political principles, and of the nature of human society, as founded on the nature of man. It was not the hasty conception of a moment, the result of passion; it did not want the opportunity of any particular violence, like the aggression of Sextus, to make it break out, but came on naturally and tranquilly, borne along by the great flood of events, which, though slow, was strong, and so sure, that no human opposition could impede its progress.

Whatever crimes may be laid to the charge of the nation, in the former revolution, were committed by the revolutionists. The murders of Stafford, of Charles; the cruelties of Cromwell, the extravagances and hypocrisy of the puritans, must stand on their account. The royalists, if not the extreme royalists, at least they who opposed the extravagances of the levellers, were generally the purest part of the nation. In the second revolution, the reverse of this was true, and the crimes which stained it were the work of the royalists. The friends of liberty had pure hands and steady consciences; but Feversham, who ordered more than twenty of his prisoners to be hanged, in cool blood; Kirke, whose executions were still worse than these; Jeffreys, whose juridical murders exceeded two hundred and fifty, beside his other modes of punishment, were royalists. It was not probable that the former revolution should succeed, or that the latter should fail.

No royal blood was shed to accomplish this change of government; and the vengeance which its partisans took upon the adherents of the banished monarch, was confined



to the single massacre of Glencoe\*, in 1692, in which about forty persons perished. The vices of these two revolutions, but above all of the last, had no peculiar complexion which denoted a return of former excesses. The cruelties which were committed were seldom accompanied, particularly on the part of the people, by wanton ferocity or by perfidy. What many call turbulence, and many a just spirit of resistance, always was a prominent and an honourable feature of the British people; but that spirit has been more remarked in them than in other nations, because it has produced effects which are permanent. It has been more censured too, because beyond the limits of these islands few men know how to appreciate the minds which it impels.

The former revolution failed; the latter was entirely successful; because it was constantly guided by moderation, and directed towards attainable liberty. The Habeas Corpus Act, the Bill of Rights, were its guarantees; and thus, by long struggles, was established the most rational system which a powerful and wealthy empire ever adopted; and under which it has enjoyed more liberty, united to more prosperity and power, than the records of history can show of any human society. The British nation deserted by its king, and voluntarily resigning itself to choose again, what many persons still call a necessary evil, instead of running, as before, into wild schemes of republicanism, is as sublime an instance of political wisdom as any that can be found among men.

Exactly one century after this revolution had completed the liberties of England, a nation whose habits and manners had always been the most opposite to freedom, undertook to run the same career; but, as the preparatory education of the two countries had for ages been different, a different result was naturally to be expected. The more indeed that France had advanced in improvement, the more enslaved she had become; and anxious to invent new modes of ele-

\* The massacre of Glencoe produced almost as much sensation as the St. Bartholomew, nearly eighteen times as murderous and perfidious. But it is peculiar to the English to make their vices sound highly, while other nations proclaim only their virtues.

gant subjection, she had long thought it an honor to wear the chains which were entwined with wreaths of roses.

This system had for ages been tending towards perfection; and, in the reign of Louis XIV., it was crowned with full success. This monarch possessed some brilliant qualities; he was brave, handsome, accomplished, and altogether formed to please a nation that was inclined to be vain of its sovereign. His glory delighted them, his profligacy seduced them; neither did the weak termination of his reign quite efface the recollection of its brilliant commencement.

To Louis XIV. succeeded the regent, who, with considerable abilities, was generally under embarrassments, but who solaced himself in the lap of luxury for all the contradictions which he met with, and indulged in scenes of riot and debauchery, such as hardly any Roman emperor dared to witness.

Louis XV. was, in some measure, a diminutive copy of his great grandfather; he had all his ambition, but in little; all his profligacy, but without its excuses; all his despotism, but without his talent; and the end of his reign, which never had been comparable to that of his predecessor, was still more deplorable.

Louis XVI. was different from all of these; timid, religious, moral, he ascended his throne in fear and trembling, lest he should not fulfil his duties; and more anxious for the public good than any king of France, perhaps, had ever been.

During the existence of the monarchy, innumerable disturbances had taken place; but upon the most frivolous pretences. Not one of them ever tended towards liberty; and though Marcel talked of privileges, the only privilege which he claimed was a monopoly of the right to murder. A confederacy formed against one French king, was called the league of public welfare; but never was a name so misapplied. In one of the religious wars, the Huguenot leaders were accused by the Catholics of wishing to establish a republic; but they never had dreamed of any such thing. These were nearly all the attempts which the

French had made to obtain their liberties ; and they do not show any strong symptoms of political wisdom.

The finances of France had, at all times, been shamefully mismanaged ; and the richest country in Europe was in a state of constant poverty. The more that men turned their minds to this subject, the more the evil seemed to increase ; and the last reigns were the most irremediably disastrous. Every species of fraud and violence was practised by the government. Bankruptcies and plunder were the usual resources ; and since the day when the debt of England began down to this hour—a period during which not a single breach of good faith has occurred there—the French people have been defrauded or plundered of more than the fee-simple of the territory of France.

French subjects had pondered little upon the interests of their country, which promised such easy prosperity. Neither was instruction general upon any topic ; and the least appropriate epithet which could be applied to this nation is the word enlightened. The example of the court had been too closely followed by inferiors, the provinces too faithfully copied the metropolis, and the peasantry continued nearly what it always was ; easily led to good or evil, and the most explosive materials on which a spark could burst. Religion had long been scoffed at, and the best preparation had been made for the adoption of atheism.

Thus disposed and thus prepared for liberty, the French nation, after fourteen centuries of arbitrary rule, engaged in a new pursuit. But they had not proceeded far, when it became evident that they could not succeed, and every step which they made removed them still further from their aim.

One of the first symptoms of failure was, that the pretexts of the revolution were different from its causes. Thousands of motives were alleged, but not one of them was the true motive : the cause was simply this—the moral state of the entire nation. France had long been undergoing a process of corruption in all its parts ; and had become unfit even for the government which it possessed in 1788. From the beginning of the disturbances the true question

was, whether the country should pass from its then ~~mild~~ not good—government, to one more strict and more coercive, all at once ; or, after essaying all the changes of popular fury, anarchy and despotism.

Of the pretexts which were alleged, there was not one which had not often existed in a greater degree than when the revolution broke out. Financial embarrassments had been heavier under the regent, but the habit of adulation had smothered all complaints about them. The vices of the court had not for a century been so few ; but formerly no speculators stood ready to try whether a government, which supposes perfection in human creatures, could be established in the most depraved society.

The sovereign then upon the throne sincerely wished for the liberty of his subjects, and would most willingly have made a reasonable sacrifice of power for their advantage. He was, in those respects at least, the reverse of the Stuarts, who would not have given up one atom of prerogative. His philanthropy afforded a golden opportunity to the audacity of unprincipled innovators, and the energy of vice increased in proportion to his forbearance.

To reform the financial department would have been easy if they who undertook it had understood the subject, a great part of which consisted in a knowledge of the times. Upon this Necker had formed a false opinion, and Calonne no opinion at all. A very small portion of public spirit would have been sufficient to cover such a deficit as that which appeared in the account—about 2,250,000*l.* sterling. The natural resources of France are prodigious, and for that reason they are always ill administered ; ministers having but little to do, neglect that little. A greater evil, however, was introduced to remedy the financial evil ; and a deliberating assembly of the worst listeners upon earth was a precarious expedient.

The French never had been in the habit of debating. The last assembly of the States General had been held one hundred and seventy-five years before this epocha. The discussion soon degenerated into dispute. The Assembly, by much the best, showed what was

from a representative government ; for, considering society and all its institutions upon abstract principles, they abolished every custom which had embodied men in one community. They destroyed the monarchy before they had anything to put in its place, and could not persuade themselves that reform and demolition were not the same thing. To sum up all, these men, unused to political reflections, self-constituted, after taking all the power out of the hands of the king and the people, passed two thousand five hundred and fifty-seven laws in a little more than two years, and framed a constitution such as could exist in no society; and which, in about twenty-one months, was succeeded by another, still more wicked and absurd.

It would be difficult to conceive that so much vice and folly could have been collected in any European country; particularly in that which so long has called itself the centre of civilisation. Yet this was far outdone by the body which took the epithet of Legislative. No institutions indeed were left for them to destroy ; but as long as human creatures and property remained, there was still enough for malice to attack, and worse was still to come.

To give an idea of the third assembly, the National Convention, would be impossible, unless by stating their actions at full length. No imagination could reach their depravity. If something worse than the worst man that ever existed were conceived, and that being multiplied by the number of conventionalists, and all their bad propensities increased by the mad audacity which association gives to vice, it would present a feeble picture of this body ; yet the laws which they enacted in about three years, amounted to eleven thousand two hundred and ten.

These three assemblies had governed France without anything to balance their authority ; and the union of the constituent assembly, in one body, was an early proof of national folly. Experience had taught the nation that the division of power was necessary for political security ; and in a new constitution the legislative body was divided into two chambers. No distinction of rank or property, however, made the separation, and both belonged to the same

class of society : age alone divided them ; and the Council of Ancients may be considered as the aristocratic part, while the Council of Five Hundred was in some measure the lower chamber. It was by these that the executive body was named, and five regicides were chosen to compose a directory, invested with something like regal power ; while at the head of the department of justice was placed the author of a law, by which every man who either smiled or did not smile, was declared a suspicious person.

The directorial constitution had lasted four years, when the true spirit of the revolution showed itself openly, and its inevitable end was approaching with rapid strides. The consular government was established, and one man, absorbing the powers of his colleagues, turned them out of office. This man was, of course, a soldier ; military despotism was the government which he introduced, and the only one which could issue out of the French revolution, and be lasting. Accordingly it continued without a prospect of change, until the ambition of the chief, most ably seconded by the military vanity of France, had awakened the anxiety of Europe, and drawn down upon him the united resistance of every kingdom.

The average duration of the preceding revolutionary governments, about five in number, was two years ; and the changes which took place were brought about by the nation itself, without the interference of other empires ; but the military despotism flourished eight times as long, and was overthrown by foreign arms. This fact alone is sufficient to show that liberty was only a pretext, and that folly and licentiousness were the true motives of the French revolution. That which nations can endure the longest is that which suits them the most.

The armies of Europe subdued the strength of France, and effected the restoration of the ancient family to the throne, supported by a charter copied from that of England, and under which **any nation that desired freedom might be free.**

**This revolution began  
those crimes were not**

all the minutæ of horror which had characterised them in every period. There is not a single act of blood or treachery, not a single day of massacre or outrage, but has its melancholy precedent, often repeated, in the former history of France. The language, indeed, was changed ; and an unusual term, liberty, was introduced, to be the excuse for all. Old crimes were committed under new names and new pretences, to make the world suppose them virtues—a species of hypocrisy not demanded by the nation itself, but practised in deference to those who heard of them from afar.

Nothing can be more false than to assert that the revolution was undertaken in the cause of freedom. The whole system of reform was a series of untruth and cunning, and all was carried on by treachery. The nearest ties of blood or friendship were allowed no confidence. Servants were bribed to betray their masters ; and in every province men and women were brought to the scaffold, by fathers, friends, or brothers. The most eloquent apostle of French revolutionary liberty exclaimed, in his fervor, ‘ De-  
‘ lation, a shame and a vice in despotic states, is a virtue  
‘ among free men ;’ and the principle was consecrated by the holiest practice.

But the cruelty of this revolution surpassed even its perfidy. The number of persons massacred, not in battle, during the reign of the best assembly, the constituent, was three thousand seven hundred and fifty-three, or near five per day during about two years. The legislative body had the effrontery to countenance these massacres ; and Mirabeau declared that Liberty was a prostitute, who delighted to revel among heaps of carcasses\*. These were the virtuous days of French regeneration.

\* A mode of general murder often resorted to in France, was the assassination of unarmed prisoners. Thus Louis VII. once burned thirteen hundred persons in a church at Vitry, in Champagne, and the act was called a flight of youth. Thus seven thousand Albigenses were cut to pieces, also in a church. In 1413, several prisoners, attached to the dauphin, were either murdered in their dungeons, or dragged out of them to be thrown into the river. Of the same stamp were the massacres of June 12, 1418, where some



The second assembly sat about three hundred and fifty-five days, and encouraged the perpetration of eight thousand and forty-four massacres, or about twenty-three per day. The Convention lasted about three years, and at its instigation one million twenty-six thousand six hundred and six massacres were committed, making about one thousand per day. But beside this, eight hundred thousand perished in civil war, twenty thousand by famine, and three thousand four hundred women died in premature childbirth, brought on by terror. The destruction of property was everywhere in the like proportion.

After the reign of the Convention, cruelty began to yield its place to cunning, and the most perfidious of governments succeeded to the most sanguinary. After this, a military

of the first nobility of France were the executioners, and the blood was flowing ankle deep in the prison-yard. Neither was the St. Bartholomew even like this; for the victims, though not in chains, were unprepared, unarmed, and defenceless. The massacre of the Hôtel de Ville, in the time of Mazarine, was of a like nature; and in 1792, the same mode of slaying prisoners was employed in the name of liberty.

But still a greater analogy will be found in the details of cruelties. In the *Jacquerie* a man was roasted by the peasantry, and devoured. On the 10th of August, 1792, one of the king's cooks, named Messalier, was put upon the spit in his own kitchen, and roasted to death. The same characteristic levity may be found in the eighteenth as in the fifteenth century. When Isabella of Bavaria, after subduing her opponents, made her triumphal entry into Paris, the streets in which, but the day before, thousands of massacres had been committed, remained unwashed, but were strewed with flowers for her passage. When the heads of the two body guards, murdered at the door of the queen's bed-room, in the palace of Versailles, were carried upon pikes in triumph before the carriage of the royal family, whom the mob were conducting prisoners to Paris, the procession, consisting of near sixty thousand persons, halted in the village of Sèvres, at a barber's door, and compelled him to dress and powder the hair of the two heads, which were carried upon pikes. The day on which the dauphin, son of John, was compelled to wear the two-coloured hat of Etienne Marcel, in order to save his life, was the forerunner of the 20th of June, 1792, when Louis XVI. was forced to put on the red cap of liberty. Carrier did but copy the *noyades* of Philip le Bon, duke of Burgundy; and Louis XI., when he gave orders to his general Bamfil, at Perpignan, to cut off the ears of the proprietors, to prevent their return, was but a little outdone by Barrère, who said, 'The dead alone never can come back.' Many other examples might be found, which prove that, in cruelty at least, and the manner of committing it, the character of the nation had not changed, and, consequently, that no change was probable in the government.



chief, endowed with extraordinary talents, and with a disposition miraculously suited to the nation, taking possession of the public mind, converted its fury into an aggressive weapon against everything that was not French. The Cardinal de Richelieu once combined the dangerous vivacity of his countrymen into a host that spread its ravages through the Continent—Buonaparte composed a still more tremendous phalanx of their vices, at the head of which he placed himself, and turned all the evils of the revolution loose upon mankind. It was no longer at home that terror reigned—that blood was shed—that property was annihilated. The malevolent republic, become an empire in his hands, let loose upon Europe the Robespierreism under which France once bled alone.

The manner in which the English and the French conducted themselves towards their sovereigns, though both events terminated in death, is characteristic. The provocation which the former had borne was great, and it is wonderful that the father did not suffer instead of the son. The demands of the English, just and reasonable as they were, had been constantly refused; and whenever any point was gained, it was withdrawn again as soon as possible. Charles had even waged war upon the Parliament that murdered him, and no man relied upon his word; but Louis XVI. was sincere and gentle, upright in his intentions, had not violated any promise, and sincerely desired a true reform. He complied with every wish of his subjects, however unreasonable; and the only reproach which can be made to him is his weakness. When pushed to extremities he did, indeed, attempt to save himself and his family by flight, but the French were not wise or generous enough to allow him to escape. The English bore the misconduct of the Stuarts for near half a century, while the gentleness of Louis could not preserve him one-tenth part of the time from the scaffold.

Charles was ill treated during his captivity, and his death was ignominious; but the sufferings of Louis were infinitely more agonising. Given in charge to the lowest of wretches, he was compelled to bear their insults, as well to himself as to his wife, his children, and his sister; and his keepers

spared him no affliction which could make his situation more bitter.

When Charles was dead, the malice of the British was appeased—when the French king was no more, his family was persecuted—his wife, his son, his sister, three princes of his blood, were murdered, and the rest were pursued by imprecations. But it may be said, the English monarch had the precaution to send his family out of the kingdom. He did so; and how was his queen, Henrietta, the daughter of the most beloved monarch whom that nation ever knew—of Henri IV.—treated by her own nearest royal relations, in her own country? The French monarch was a better man than the British, and for this reason the murder of Louis XVI. is less excusable.

Another characteristic which distinguishes the two revolutions is, the fate of religion. Ever since the time of Wickliffe, the tendency in England was to simplify the forms of worship, even more than was consonant with a monarchical government. Such a system must lead to atheism, if not sincere—to enthusiasm, if the heart be really strong enough to maintain its belief by spiritual feeling alone. Fortunately the latter prevailed; and though no doubt many may have perverted the practice, the principle which became prevalent was religious exaggeration.

Even admitting an assertion which is not true, that enthusiasm is capable of producing as much evil as irreligion, still the effects which each leaves behind it are completely opposite. Fanaticism is a fever, but atheism is death. From the one, men may recover—from the other they cannot. Irreligion leaves no limit to vice, while enthusiasm, not daring to commit any act but in the name of devotion, has a boundary which it must not pass. It was in the name of the Lord that Cromwell condemned his sovereign to the block; but he never could have used such pretexts coolly to murder one thousand persons per day, during one thousand days. Nothing but atheism could, in the present age, have tolerated such scenes of blood as those which were hourly committed in France.

One of the first measures of the constit

to rob the clergy of its distinctions and revenues. Without parade and splendour, there would be no appearance of devotion in France. Strip the altar of its plate and jewels, the priest of his pomp and retinue, and luxurious men will no longer respect them. Instead of proposing a gradual and rational reform, which might have placed religion on a more respectable footing, the steps which this assembly took were towards its destruction; and the Convention crowned the work, by decreeing that atheism was to be the religion of the state. On the 7th of November, 1793, the Bishop of Paris, followed by many other bishops and prelates of inferior order, publicly abjured the errors of Christianity, and a decree was passed to order the Committee of Public Instruction to substitute a rational and civic form of worship in their place. This was done. In every church a common prostitute represented the Goddess of Reason, and, seated on her altar, received the homage of the faithful. Some other creeds as impious as this succeeded; and though much has been said in praise of Buonaparte for having restored religion, he merely opened the churches, and changed the penalty of entering them from death to contempt and ridicule. But the man whose actions showed that he had no thought of futurity—who once turned Mahometan, and apostatised back again to the creed which he never believed, was a strange apostle to convert a renegade nation to Christianity.

Since the restoration of the Bourbon family, many attempts have been made to bring back religion, but in vain. Every feeling of devotion and piety has been rooted out of the hearts of the people; the ancient forms have lost the grasp which they had upon habit and credulity, and the nation rejects them as unusual. The persons who really do wish to restore the Catholic creed will not abate anything of its exploded mummeries. They who refuse them know nothing which they could propose in their room, and thus, between exaggeration and indifference, France remains in a state of expectant atheism.

The moral consequences of what precedes have been most fatal, and have led the nation far away from the liberty

which they pretended to demand. The most calamitous and degrading slavery weighed upon them for twenty-five years. A set of beings, such as no other European country has produced, succeeded each other with a rapidity not to be believed; and it would be an injustice to the memory of the worst abettor of Cromwell to compare him with the least atrocious member of the Convention. Three things particularly characterise this revolution: 1st, The little respectability, even for talent, of the men, two or three excepted, who rose to be at its head. 2nd, The spirit of licentious glory which effaced the crimes of military violence by its success. 3rd, The facility with which France forgot her vices and her reverses.

If ever there was a time when the established order of things promised liberty to France, it is the present\*. She now enjoys a moderate constitutional monarchy—a charter copied from that which so long has guaranteed the freedom of Englishmen. A country surrounded by no impregnable frontier, cannot ever be so free from military influence as an island. Nevertheless, the present state of the government might secure as much liberty as any great continental nation can enjoy in this age; but the people do not appreciate it, neither was it in any way the work of their wisdom. Buonaparte, collecting together the fragments and leavings of all the revolutionary governments, composed a system of them all; but government was a secondary object in his mind. The restoration took up the remains of the imperial rule, preserving many things which had better been abolished; but the greatest defects of this event were in its essence, not in its forms.

In the first place, France was not liberated from the despotism of Buonaparte by France, but by foreign armies. To this the greatest objection is, not that it was the result of force, but that there was no national desire to arrest the tyranny of the former government. The true calamity is the depravity of those who prefer military glory to freedom, and find more delight in hearing the groans of the vanquished, mixed with the rattling of their own chains, than

\* This was written before the late revolution in France.—Ed.

in allowing other nations to be happy, and in being free themselves. This condition is not much less desperate than was that of the Roman empire, particularly when it is recollected that such has been their invariable disposition for ages.

The next objection is, that the restoration has become heir to all the vices of the revolution. Next to vindictive reactions, this is the worst circumstance which can accompany the re-establishment of social order.

When Charles II. was restored to the English throne, he did not find the people demoralised, though still inclined to fanatical fermentation. He himself, indeed, was corrupt, and his courtiers shared in his depravity; but no great popular immorality was tolerated. The defaulters of the revolution were not received with open arms—the murderers of his father did not become the counsellors of the king. Examples were made of the regicides, such as it becomes every honest nation to make, and, with one or two exceptions, a fair medium between indifference and revenge was maintained. Had less been done, impunity would have left the people a dangerous encouragement to vice.

The French revolution had created an infinitely greater number of much greater criminals; and, to give to all their deserts, might have had an appearance of vengeance. The regicides were more numerous—murderers were to be found in every street, and plunderers in every house; but the distance between sanguinary reactions and impunity is extreme. Still greater is the space which ought to separate rewards from just and merited punishments. To allow the robber exultingly to enjoy his booty—to take the bloody hand of the assassin as the pledge of peace—to place a brother's murderer near the throne—to allow the word of God to be proclaimed by an atheistical prelate, whose hands, now raised to call down blessings on his flock, once signed the innumerable death-warrants of the just—are not acts of honesty. Dreadful, indeed, is the state of that nation whose most substantial plea for impunity is the universality of guilt. Yet this was the motive which softened down all the anti-jacobin reactions of the revolution, as if men were inviolable in pro-

portion as they were atrocious. The greatest crime which a nation can commit towards mankind is, to bring liberty into disgrace\*.

From the worst revolution which ever happened in a Christian country, it will be some satisfaction to turn to others of a gentler nature, and to consider those which have best effected the greatest ends that can be proposed at once—independence and liberty.

The attempt of a people inhabiting a poor and mountainous territory, which, to the very centre, forms successive barriers against invasion—inured to want, and unacquainted with luxury, simple and united, resolved on death or liberty,—promises a different result from that which the French have obtained. The independence and freedom which the

\* It may be curious to compare a few of the grievances of the French before the revolution, with the reliefs by which they were succeeded. The tyranny of Louis XVI. was the pretext for his murder; but he was succeeded by Brissot, Marat, Robespierre, Barras, and Buonaparte. The vices of the great were exclaimed against; but the crimes of the people were multiplied ten-fold. Levity was laid to the charge of the court; but the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes became a legal institution by the repetition of hourly divorces; and gallantry was succeeded by authorised prostitution. A single bastille was destroyed, in which were found seven prisoners, all deserving their fate. Forty-four thousand bastilles supplied the place of that one; and as one of twelve men, composing a committee of public safety in every municipality in France, could send whom he pleased to prison, it follows that five hundred and seventy-eight thousand men had the legal right of depriving their fellow-citizens of liberty, without appeal or responsibility; and the loss of liberty was quickly followed by the loss of life. Some feudal rights, still remaining, were called oppressive of the peasantry; and the departments immediately became filled with commissaries, and deputies, and prefects, and sub-prefects, and revolutionary tribunals, and revolutionary armies. But the list would have no end.

That some abuses were corrected, is undeniable. It is impossible to destroy everything without destroying something bad; and when an old edifice is pulled down, the vices of its antiquated construction, together with the ravages of time, must disappear. But the question in such cases is, whether what has been gained is worth the price of time, and blood, and happiness which has been spent in the pursuit? What France has hitherto obtained has been merely negative. She has *not* a great many of the abuses she formerly had; but then she has *not* many of the good things which accompanied them; and, above all, she has nothing that can inspire confidence. After near thirty years of crimes and sufferings, it may be doubted whether she is now more capable of liberty than she was in 1788; for she has *not* gained in morality than she has gained in wisdom.

Swiss established in the beginning of the fourteenth century, have been preserved ever since, with little modification, till the late events, by which the entire independence of Europe has suffered such injuries.

The revolt of the Swiss cantons against the emperor Albert broke out in the very year in which Edward II. banished and recalled his favorite Gaveston, and three years before that in which the Knights Templars were tortured by Philip the Fair. Political wisdom was in its infancy everywhere; and a country in which men were condemned by nature to so much toil and labour, cannot be supposed to have made a greater progress, at that early period, than England and France. The characteristic of this revolution is not the comprehensive wisdom, resulting from knowledge and experience; but the instinctive perspicacity of native intellect, suddenly roused by necessity, and sharpened by simple virtue and courage. Three cantons began the attack, and repelled the efforts of the Emperor to recover his authority.

The Swiss acknowledged the sovereignty of the house of Hapsburgh; but Albert wished to convert the provinces into an hereditary appendage of his family. To forward his designs, he sent two principal emissaries, who committed the most outrageous acts of oppression. The spirit of the noble peasants was roused, and resistance became general. The story of William Tell—which, for the honor of human nature, let all men join in hoping to be true, and true of him; the names of Furst, Melchtal, Stauffacher, are too well known to require being mentioned; and the virtue of the entire nation was not inferior to theirs.

As many private instances of injustice had occurred, some particular quarrels had ensued; Melchtal had beaten the valet of Landenbergh, who came to seize his oxen; and the brother of a peasant girl of Arth had slain the ravisher of his sister. But such events were rare, though provocation was extreme; and the moderation of the people was such, that Landenbergh was peaceably conducted beyond the frontiers, and there turned adrift. The just vengeance of Tell delivered the world of Gesler; and the fury of an



injured husband clove the head of the third governor, Wolfenshiesser. But if these men had not excited the enmity of individuals by personal injuries, their fate would have been as mild as that of their colleague.

When the territory was delivered from the presence of its oppressors, the three cantons—Schweitz, Uri, and Underwalden, formed a league offensive and defensive in the valley of Grütli ; and no writing was employed to commemorate the conditions. The verbal promise of each canton to be faithful to its engagement was sufficient ; and the stipulation was engraved on the heart of every confederate.

These noble cantons were immediately put to the ban of the empire, and excommunicated by the pope ; yet they won one of the most memorable battles in history ; and, with the loss of fourteen men, defeated the imperial troops, with immense slaughter, in the defiles of Morgarten. Immediately after this, the league of Brunnen was written ; and it is according to this model that the Helvetic confederacy has since been formed.

Had the Swiss been as wise as they were brave, every canton would have joined at the same moment to oppose the tyranny of Austria : but the insurrection was begun without premeditation ; and the mere instinct of right and wrong, aided by the most favorable position for combating a common enemy, was sufficient to make it prosper. The slowness with which the union was completed, was a proof how much more virtue had contributed to its formation than civilisation ; and to this hour it is the courage, the hardihood, the energy of that nation, more than any profound political combinations, which have enabled them to serve as a happy barrier, on the one side, to the ambition of Austria ; and, on the other, to the aggression of France.

About the middle of the sixteenth century, the Netherlands undertook to shake off the yoke of Spain. As no special mention has hitherto been made of the Dutch nation, it may not be uninteresting to say a few words upon the character of a people who occupy a rank so much superior to that which their territory and their population seem to promise. And such is ever the happy lot of those who are



obliged to conquer early difficulties ; and whose first successes stimulate them, not only to overcome the immediate obstacles which oppose their progress, but to lay the foundation of a future greatness, much beyond their natural means.

The considerations of soil, climate, and fertility, may be nearly overlooked among the causes which form the character of the Dutch ; for the most northern and indigent nation is not a prey to so much anxiety as they are ; and the Laplander may enjoy the little he possesses with more assurance than the Hollander. The labour and attention which he must employ to keep out the inroads of the waters, have given him greater industry and patience than other men ; and, as his own efforts only can impede destruction, he is phlegmatic in waiting for the danger which impends. His valour is nowhere so obstinate as in his own territory ; and why should he not be obstinate in defending against the swords of man the soil which he every day protects against an enemy who, when chafed by tempests, is the most implacable with which human industry can cope ? His sensibility is dull—his anger lasting—his generosity calculated—his public spirit greater than that of luxurious nations ; and the first of his virtues is charity toward the needy of his own country. With these qualities, it is to be expected that religious persecutions should be severe—that resistance against oppression should be inveterate—that republicanism should be the leading feature of the government ; but that more attention should be paid to partial circumstances than to the general principles of freedom. In all the outlines of their character, this nation must be ranked among the proud ; but their pride does not, like Roman or like British pride, belong to the most enlarged modification of that sentiment.

The revolution which gave independence to the Dutch was, in a great measure, caused by religion. No sooner was Lutheranism known in Holland, than it excited a general curiosity ; but, as the nation was not the most enlightened at that time, the reformation was soon corrupted by the anabaptists, and followed by cruelties and persecuti

at Leyden, Haarlem, Amsterdam, and most of the principal towns. To these succeeded the rigours of the Spanish governors, who deluged the country with blood. Granvelle and the Duke of Alva had inflicted wounds which the milder Requesens could not heal; and, after various successes and distresses, during which the sovereignty of the States was offered to many princes of Europe, and refused by all, independence was finally conquered by arms. After a contest of nearly half a century, a truce was concluded for twelve years with Spain; which was the first official step towards a recognition of the just pretensions of the provinces.

The crimes which the Dutch themselves had committed before their attempts for liberty, were great; but the sufferings which they endured from the vices of others were still greater. Fifty thousand persons are said to have perished, on account of their religious principles, by Spanish persecutions; nor will the number be found exaggerated, when it is recollected that the Duke of Alva, on his return to Madrid, boasted that, during his government, he had caused eighteen thousand victims to die by the hands of the public executioner. During the struggles for independence, there was nearly a cessation of cruelty and injustice; but, after the truce, they began again, and principally on account of religion. Sects arose; and the pensionary Barneveldt, an incorruptible patriot, but an opponent of the house of Orange, was brought to the block. Upon the whole\*, this revolution cannot be compared to that of Switzerland for virtue; and were it not that experience had decided in its favor, the constitution adopted by the provinces would not have been considered as wise. But it sometimes happens that the necessity of union and firmness gives a solidity to action which it had not suggested to theory.

\* Few nations have professed more energetically a difference of opinion, political as well as religious, than the inhabitants of the Seven United Provinces. Before their liberation, the Cabelliaux and the Hockens often came to blows; and since the Stadtholdership was first created, its supporters and its antagonists, in various forms, have proceeded with unrelenting animosity to each other's destruction.

But the best revolution which the world has witnessed is the last, which had in view, at once, both liberty and independence. History cannot furnish anything comparable to the liberation of the United States of America, for wisdom, virtue, moderation, and prudence; or one so big with important consequences to the future destinies of mankind.

The colonies in America had no sooner grown to strength and prosperity, than they began to feel, as all men do, that the happiest lot is independence. Their British education had made this sentiment most powerful in them; and a comparison between them and the other settlements in the same continent, would almost prove that the only method to make colonies adhere to the mother country, is to prevent their prosperity.

But these countries were in a situation which never did occur, and which never again can happen, upon so large a scale, to the descendants of men. Navigation has ascertained that so vast a tract of land cannot now remain unknown, and consequently that so great a surface of habitable country never again can be discovered, peopled, and liberated in so short a time.

Another interesting particular is, that the eastern coast of North America, now called the United States, really had no social infancy. The men who settled there immediately introduced the arts and institutions which they had known at home, and their condition was at once mature. Few lessons were necessary to promote civilisation, and all that remained to be done was to increase and multiply. So rapid a progress of so vast a territory never was known, and the last settled provinces of the new continent became the earliest improved.

The ill-defined boundaries of the new settlements, and the difficulty of ascertaining the dates of occupation, produced frequent wars in Europe; but final possession of all the northern continent east of the Mississippi was ceded to the British in 1763; and the provinces which soon were in the most thriving condition, were in the habit of discussing state affairs. Long before this time, indeed, they were so well acquainted with the right which all men have to be

taxed by themselves, and not by others, that they had agreed to form a general council, composed of members deputed to this end, from all the states ; while the English, on the other hand, did not choose to admit of this right, and insisted that the subsidies expended in defence of the colonies should be levied by taxes imposed by the British parliament.

This principle was acted upon by England for the first time, on the 22d March, 1765. A law ordained that no bills, bonds, &c., should be valid, unless written upon stamped paper, liable to a certain duty. No doubt was entertained that a nation ‘planted,’ as Mr. Charles Townshend said, ‘by our care, nourished by our indulgence, till they are ‘grown to a degree of opulence and strength, would grudge ‘to contribute their mite to relieve us from the heavy burden under which we lie.’ But Colonel Barré replied, not, however, quite correctly, ‘that it was the oppressions of ‘England which had planted them in America ; and that ‘they had grown by our neglect.’ But this famous stamp act was not relished by the colonies ; and a spirited opposition produced its repeal in the following year. The principle, however, was not abandoned ; and duties were laid upon certain necessary commodities. This attempt was not more successful than the former, and in 1770, the act was repealed, leaving only a duty of three-pence per pound upon tea. But even this was too much to be borne by men who were jealous of the principle ; particularly as the repeal of the act was accompanied by a declaration, that the British parliament had a right to legislate for the colonies.

An early opportunity occurred for the American people to show the spirit of justice which guided them. A dispute took place in Boston, between some persons of the town and some British soldiers, in which three of the former were killed. The soldiers were tried by an American jury, when it appeared that, having been insulted and ill-used, they were in some measure excusable, and a favorable verdict was returned.

A similar spirit of moderation guided all their steps. A

vessel had been stationed in Rhode Island, to prevent smuggling; but the inhabitants set it on fire after sending the officers and crew on shore. When an attempt was made to force the landing of some tea in Boston, the only outrage which the Americans committed was to throw three hundred and forty-two chests of it into the water; but no lives were lost. Some further acts, in support of the plan which Great Britain was pursuing, produced unanimity in ordering a day of fast and prayer, to avert the impending calamities; neither did any measures of injustice intimidate the Americans.

A bill was passed to prohibit all commercial intercourse with the town where these scenes had taken place; but the inhabitants made a general appeal to the colonies to concur in preventing importations from Great Britain. They even convened a congress, and, in this assembly, as spirited and as rational proceedings as any which ever occurred in the British parliament, ensued. The addresses sent to England and distributed to American subjects, were as just as any that ever were written by the pen of man.

Some measures of the governor which, in this situation, were useful military precautions, spread a general alarm, and produced remonstrances, together with the formation of a provincial congress, which took into consideration the rights of the people; while all the neighbouring country poured in relief to the suffering Bostonians. An enterprise conceived for the purpose of taking possession of the warlike stores of the province, brought on a conflict between the British troops and the native militia, in which some lives were lost. In the memorable battle of Lexington, where the independence of America was first sealed with the blood of the contending parties, sixty-five British and forty-nine provincials were killed.

The cry of arms became general. Thirty thousand soldiers were raised, and reinforcements arrived from Britain to oppose them. Martial law was proclaimed, and regular hostilities began near Charlestown, in which, as in every battle for liberty, the loss was trifling on the part of those who fought on her side, and great amid her oppo-

nents. Very soon after this, one of the most virtuous men that ever lived, General Washington, was placed at the head of American affairs, which immediately assumed an appearance of systematic opposition to the dominion of England.

In July 1776, the declaration of congress proclaiming independence was published. This event took place two hundred and eighty-four years after the night on which Columbus, certain that in a few hours the conjecture of his life would be verified, ordered his ships to lie to before the world which he was next morning to discover; and little more than a century and a half had elapsed since the first settlement of the English in Virginia and Massachusetts.

It is probable that the contest for American independence would have been protracted, but not prevented, had it not been for the interference of a European nation in concerns which only regarded the mother country and the colonies. A treaty of alliance was made between America and France, and a fleet arrived to assist the independents, in despite of the laws and usages of nations. Certain it is that the affairs of the natives were at a low ebb at the end of 1776, and in 1777, and were entirely supported by the efforts of one man; but after various successes, independence was acknowledged by Great Britain in 1783.

The circumstances which thus far distinguish this revolution are, that it was begun without personal animosity, and entirely upon a discussion of principles. The treatment which the colonies had constantly received was not such as would have exasperated any men not particularly susceptible upon liberty. No such instances of tyranny, public or private, had occurred, as in the Spanish and Portuguese settlements; and the mother country had favored their prosperity in every point.

Neither were the sums which the British demanded to defend the colonies, before the peace of 1763, exorbitant; they were no more than were necessary, or than they themselves must have expended to the same end: the Americans knew this, and did not complain of the injurious amount of the demand; the grievance was

selves were not allowed to levy the subsidy, but were compelled to submit to the decree of the English parliament. No such dispute ever arose in the colonies of other nations, although their measures were infinitely more unjust, and though the will of the sovereign was law. But the British colonies were as sensitive to injustice as England herself could be ; while South America was as poor, as oppressed, and as patient as Spain or Portugal under despotism and the inquisition. The laws of Britain had their full execution there ; the trial by jury was as perfect as in the country of Alfred ; and the bill of rights, the *habeas corpus*, gave equal security to the subjects of the realm, whether placed in the presence of the legislature, or separated from it by the Atlantic.

The consequence of such a beginning was, that not a single crime has sullied the struggle for American independence. Battles were fought, and men were killed in fight, but not in cold blood. Not a single massacre was committed, and the wars were as little sanguinary as wars can be in any situation. At the same time, it is true that the Americans had to contend with the most humane enemies upon earth, who, though sorely grieved at the revolt, committed fewer cruelties than any other people would have done in a similar state of irritation.

A revolution thus conducted accomplished every object which it had in view ; but many nations would have remained contented, as Portugal wisely did, with having obtained its independence. The wish of America was wider than this, and she no sooner discarded the yoke of England than she framed a suitable constitution. The task, indeed, was not very difficult, for she had but to retain the institutions which she possessed already. The divisions and subdivisions of society which, in England, constitute so many little democracies, had been adopted there, and were one of the great means of promoting a simultaneous action throughout the states. The larger assemblies convened during the war became the basis of the legislative body, and the British constitution was the acknowledged model. Thus by the just triumph of the American people, the new continent



beheld the rise of a republic, the most extensive which, in ancient or in modern history, has been ruled by a government entirely popular in all its branches.

The mode adopted to make this succeed was a federation. So large a country\*, under so lax a government, could not have possessed the unity of design and the promptness of execution necessary for its safety; but the subdivision into smaller states, each of which has authority to regulate its own internal affairs, and the union of all to direct the interests of the whole, have produced a system sufficiently moderate and sufficiently energetic for every emergency which has hitherto occurred. The constitution, however, was not received without considerable discussion, and in some of the states the opposition was great. Eleven of them consented to the federal government, and on March 3d,

\* Extent of territory becomes a disadvantage, as soon as a sacrifice of liberty is required from those who can bear the most of it, from those who can bear the least. The possession of so large a latitude may, perhaps, retard the progress of the northern Russians; and should they ever attempt to become free, they will find an obstacle in the vanity of their southern countrymen, which must either restrict their liberty, or produce a separation. The chance of equal freedom would be greater in the United States of America, were the greatest extent in longitude, not in latitude. In a country thinly peopled, and intent upon agriculture, the bonds of a federative republic may keep together even Massachusetts and Georgia, but a time may come when their disparity will be too strongly felt to allow them to remain under the same government. Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, with the Floridas, perhaps, may become too indolent, and too luxurious, to be anxious about their liberty, while the northern states cherish freedom and independence. Perhaps, too, if it be not too presumptuous thus to look into future ages, the separation may be marked by the Potomac, and thus divide Mount Vernon from the city which bears the name of its revered proprietor; whence, following the present boundaries of Maryland and Virginia, it may reach the Ohio, or stretch out to the Mississippi, which it will follow to the sea; thus including the Land of Blood, Kentucky, Tennessee; the whole eastern territory of Georgia; the Cheeks and Cherokee Indians; and forming one of the most delightful countries in the Old or in the New World. When the sway and the example of the British, aided by the natural circumstances of Canada, shall have worn out the impressions which the French settlers left there, the Canadians may perhaps unite with their neighbours of New England. From the Chesapeake to the coast of Labrador, as far as inhospitable frosts do not forbid all human habitations, another empire may arise, as happy in its social relations as the first in its physical enjoyments. What stretches both will make toward the  
ad upon  
unforeseen circumstances.



1789, delegates assembled at New York, and proceeded to business with all the steadiness and solemnity of the most ancient and practised legislature.

It may be doubted whether a greater portion of liberty be really enjoyed in the United States or in Great Britain. Life, property, and freedom are not better secured in the one than in the other, and many of the states admit what, even in the most despotic governments of Europe, has long since been exploded—personal bondage. Whatever superiority the union might claim in having restricted hereditary privileges, the toleration of slavery has more than compensated.

This revolution was characterised by another vice, which, though not to be compared with many that have sullied the political disturbances of other nations, is not without producing a strong effect in relaxing the morals of the people. The Congress, at an early period of the revolt, was compelled by want of money to issue bills for the supply of the war. Repeated emissions of this medium at length reduced it to the one hundred and fiftieth part of its nominal value. During five years paper-currency was the only circulating medium, and amounted to two hundred millions of dollars; but specie being introduced again, the value of paper sunk.

The varying prices of these two currencies gave rise to innumerable frauds. Debts contracted in specie were paid in paper of the same nominal, but of a very different real value. Hosts of speculators, who ventured a little to win much, no longer restrained by the rules of rigid honesty, seized upon every opportunity of illicit gain. A standard was fixed for the price of every article, and laws were enacted to prohibit buyers and sellers from giving or from taking more than the regulated sum. Thus every branch of honest industry was checked, and a large field was left open to fraud and speculation. Nor was this all. As every state emitted its own special bills of credit, their different interests made them almost enemies, and the union which had so nobly withstood the attacks of war, was secretly undermined by the avidity of speculators.

The only point of view in which the French and the

American revolutions can be brought in contact, is that now under consideration. In every other aspect they appear as the most decided contrasts. The former was the worst, the most perfidious, and the most sanguinary that ever was attempted, and long was the most unsuccessful. The latter was the best, the most honest, the most humane, and the most prosperous ever accomplished ; but in financial operations America partook a little in the bad faith which, always common in France, became during the revolution most enormous.

At an early period the French found the necessity of creating a paper money, to supply the demands of the revolution. These assignats, which were to be received in payment of the confiscated property, maintained their value during some time, but as their emission increased, they became depreciated. In about two years, 2000,000,000 of livres had been fabricated (about 83,000,000*l.* sterling), and they lost about 50 per cent. This depreciation continued gradually, with every new emission, till, in July, 1796, the sum total amounted to forty milliards of livres, or about 1,666,666,666*l.*, and the value of one franc in specie was two thousand in paper. To these succeeded the mandates, the currency of which was enforced on pain of death, but which were instantly extinct. A reduction of the public funds to one-third of their value, was another instance of public breach of faith ; but the robberies committed by the government were nothing, when compared to the transactions between individuals. The maximum of 1793 was productive of greater ills than the restriction of prices in America, and the speculations upon assignats infinitely exceeded those upon American paper.

It would be doing great injustice to the American revolution, were it supposed that either the stamp act, or the duty upon tea, or the Boston post bill, or any acts, bills, or duties were its causes. These, indeed, were, like the rape of Lucretia in the expulsion of the Tarquins, the occasions which made the discontents break out just when they did ; but the causes were vaster, and though none of these grievances ever had been thought of, the rupture must have taken

place in a short time. When opportunity is ripe, the slightest trifle brings it to account. The real and true cause of the American revolution was the strength and prosperity of the country.

Every nation has not pursued the same career as those which have now been examined; and revolutions have sometimes taken place with an intention very opposite to liberty. Such was the change in the government of Denmark, at the very period when the final reform was taking place in the British empire.

The good fortune and abilities of Frederic III. had endeared him to his people, and he had most particularly ingratiated himself with the lower orders, by compelling the nobility to grant them some privileges which they did not possess before. War had exhausted the kingdom, and a diet had assembled at Copenhagen, to take into consideration the state of the realm. The commons attributed the distresses to the nobility, and the nobility paid no attention to their complaints. The former were joined by the clergy, and their party, thus reinforced, became considerable. Their adversaries proposed some taxes, offering to submit to them themselves, though, by an express law, their order was exempted from every impost. The nobles endeavoured also to reclaim some obsolete immunities, to diminish the royal authority, and to check the influence of the two classes united against them. These at length became exasperated, and demanded a right of sharing the domains which the nobles had hitherto possessed alone, at a very moderate rent. Dispute succeeded to dispute, till at length the friends of the monarch suggested a plan of extending his power, and making the crown hereditary. The bishop of Zealand proposed the measure, which was discussed and agreed to by the inferior orders before the nobles had any intimation of their proceedings. The compliance of this body was not so ready, but it was finally extorted by the help of menaces, and by the vigorous measure of opposing their project of abandoning the capital. On the 16th October, 1664, the charter signed by Frederic on his accession to the throne was annulled—he himself was liberated from all his engage-

ments—a new oath of allegiance was taken—and the royal law of Denmark, containing the new form of government, was promulgated.

No revolution which evinced so little vice, ever showed so large a portion of folly as the preceding. The nobles were so destitute of common prudence as to indispose both king and commons towards them, and still further to alienate the affections of the clergy, whose interests seldom differed much from that of their own. Had they ceded a little of the just demands of the people, they might have refused the rest, and perhaps have detached some popular partisans. Had the people, too, been wise enough to feel their own strength, and to unite, they might have made better conditions for themselves than a renunciation of all their rights. Elevation of character was wanting on all sides—so, too, was wisdom; but none of the heinous crimes which have often stained even struggles for liberty, disfigured the proceedings of either party. Unfit for freedom the nation certainly was, and the best feature of its character was that, amid all its folly, it could yet perceive that it was incapable of good government.

In this case, despotism was not embraced out of an absolute aversion to liberty, but as a resource to which the Danish people recurred to protect themselves against the oppression of the higher orders. There have been men, however, not in Africa, nor yet in Asia, but in Europe—not in the dark ages of modern times, nor in those of remote antiquity, but in the year 1822, who have rejected freedom out of pure love to despotism, and violently snatched back their chains out of the hand which would have taken them away. These men were Spaniards.

The aversion which the French had excited in Spain, during the peninsular war, was never, perhaps, exceeded by any national antipathy; and it was natural to expect that a second invasion, attempted about eight years afterwards, would have found the nation in the same disposition; but the king whom they once adored—for whom they once fought—had been restored to them; demagogues had proclaimed a constitution, liberty was talked of, and all was

changed. The troops who, not ten years before, were held in execration, now marched through the country unopposed, and were hailed as liberators by the very peasants who so lately pursued them with vengeance. In them were seen the men who were to deliver the nation from the yoke of freedom, and be the restorers of despotism and the inquisition. All former outrages were effaced by this act of kindness, and a handful of soldiers, who formerly could not have maintained themselves in any outpost, now captured cities, conquered provinces, and kept possession of the kingdom.

But even later than 1822, another nation, the Portuguese, have shown a similar love for arbitrary government. The British, long the allies of Portugal, and lately her best support, were held in detestation as soon as they appeared to support a constitution for which she was unfit, and a liberty which she disliked; and both the kingdoms of the peninsula have shown themselves as ardent supporters of despotism, as ever the Greeks and Romans were of freedom. To suppose that nations like these can cherish the principles for which Englishmen would die, is to imagine that all men are alike. Sicily is a further confirmation of this assertion.

A revolution, which was the reverse of all those that have been mentioned, is that which terminated in the dismemberment of Poland. The government of that country long had been defective, and two centuries of elective monarchy were filled with every species of crime and of corruption. The authority of the king was weakened at every new succession; and a diminution of his power was made a condition for the support which the aristocracy lent toward his nomination. The *Liberum veto* destroyed the equilibrium of the constitution; and the establishment of a permanent council in 1733, made the king a cipher. Confusion and vice increased, and the country became a scene of devastation and blood. Such a state of things gave an opportunity to three powerful and ambitious neighbours to unite against it, and the partition of Poland ensued.

Had it not been for the vices and folly of this nation, Austria, Prussia, and Russia would have had no pretext for their attack. When confusion is so great as to begin

alarming to other states, their right of remonstrance is undeniable. But the question is, was this true of Poland? and was the partition a measure of safety or of ambition? That the nation was not capable of governing itself cannot be doubted; but that it should have been torn to pieces by foreigners is not so certain. Its internal misery was no just motive for destroying it. If it threatened its neighbours with destruction, self-preservation made their interference necessary.

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### CONCLUSION.

IF it be admitted that government is not a gift of heaven, but a result of a social mind, a medium of restraint and liberty proportioned to the qualities of men, this undeniable conclusion forces itself upon the understanding. Every independent nation is governed exactly as well as it deserves, or can bear to be governed.

How misplaced, then, is the commiseration bestowed upon a nation despotically ruled, as well as the odium with which the sovereign is generally covered. We may, indeed, pity the governed as we pity a criminal condemned to perpetual chains; but with whatever detestation we may view the tyrant, we cannot but allow that the part which he acts is less grovelling than that of his subjects.

In the first place, tyrants are the produce, not the creators of slavery. Were there no corruption among the governed, there could be no despotism in governors. Tyranny is primarily an effect, not a cause. It proceeds from the vices and follies of the many, who permit the few to assume an authority over them, which a due share of wisdom or virtue could easily reduce within just bounds. When established, indeed, it does react, and must be held among the most efficient of the secondary causes which promote the degradation of mankind.

In the next place, the despot acts a part which is more

in harmony with nature than that of his subjects. He at least aspires to elevate himself; while they become the artificers of their own infamy; and he may plead this excuse in his favor—that he but follows the impulse by which all human nature is carried progressively forwards.

Thirdly, if superiority in some shape or another be the basis of inequality, it must follow that he who raises himself to be the chief of a despotic government, possesses some requisite for his situation which other men have not; and, if he is a just object of detestation, what must they be who submit to him? Can we say that the multitude, who might have prevented the growth of this single monster, and who, if not utterly degraded, might still overthrow him, are proper objects for no sentiment but compassion? and will no horror, no indignation be mingled with the pity which we feel for them?

When nations have not physical means to defend themselves from foreign oppression, they may indeed, without being contemptible, be reduced under the yoke of a tyrant. It is not probable, however, that they will long remain estimable; for tyranny will here, as elsewhere, exercise its degrading influence. This is the only case in which despotism can be considered as the first cause of corruption, without having previously been its effect.

Of all the sciences which have occupied the attention of mankind, the most interesting and the noblest is political philosophy. The same proficiency, however, has not been made in this, as in many other branches of knowledge where speculation has been more calm and constant. So many accidental causes, independently of the never ceasing play of passion, cut short the researches and experiments of men upon government; and few have lived to see the results which they had anxiously expected.

Notwithstanding this, however, some progress has been made, and the condition of mankind has been gradually and considerably improved, since the time when the great philosopher of antiquity, who so much extended the boundaries of knowledge, wrote his treatise upon the science of politics.

tion. But is it therefore to be considered as the limit of all human attempts in the political sciences? May not a hope be honestly expressed—without treason to the present age—that posterity may, in some part of the globe, improve as much upon the knowledge which moderns bequeath to them, as moderns have done upon their inheritance of Greek and Roman policy?

As the science of politics improves, the necessity of checks and counterpoises may give place to better things, and government may return to something like the simplicity of ancient modes. A degree of wisdom may come, when to oppose one force by another may be considered as a waste of power; and when no necessity will appear for employing a great prerogative on the one hand, and a great check upon the other. Such a progress, forming a third epocha in the science of politics, would be in perfect analogy with the course which the understanding constantly pursues; for, in every improvement, three periods may distinctly be perceived. The first is that in which men begin to cast their eyes around them, to collect facts which they consider as the limits of truth. Then all appears simplicity, because they are all ignorance. The second is when observations have been multiplied, but before reflection has matured them. Crowds of perceptions inflate the imagination, and Nature appears more prodigal than she is. The last is when meditation has cleared away the superfluous circumstances collected before the mind had become expert in the art of comparing. By such a progress, all the sciences have advanced, from the earliest to the latest times. This little spot—the earth—was once supposed to be the centre round which the stupendous firmament revolved; and the celestial machine was simple. When further observations taught that all the heavens did not move with equal velocity, the hypothesis of a double system of motion was imagined to explain these new appearances. Maturer thought came at last to prove that one single centre was sufficient; and that, while neither the firmament nor the sun had the motion which we supposed, we were ourselves carried forwards in obedience to the simplest and the most invariable laws. It is thus that



speculate upon is now practised ; and many institutions, which are now fundamental in every free country, were not even conceived by them. A representation, instead of a collection of the people ; a separation of the executive from the legislative power, and of the judicial from both of these ; a balance in the legislature, by means of three equal branches, independent of each other ; the abolition of personal slavery, and the admission of every man to the equal rank of citizen, are the principal features of modern liberty.

The ideas entertained by the ancients upon popular representation were altogether incomplete. In very small states, where the number of voters was diminished by the exclusion of many from the right of citizenship, this was of small importance. But, in extensive populations, it would be fatal ; and a happy expedient has removed the inconvenience of tumult and acclamation. The difficulty is now reduced to that of selecting representatives who shall be as like the people as possible, shall have the same interests, and whose opinions shall be a fair and candid image of the minds of their constituents.

A separation of the executive, the legislative, and the judicial powers, is another improvement. The perfection of despotism consists in the union of these powers ; and the most defective government of Europe is not yet depraved enough to allow no intermediate officers between the people and the crown.

The division of the legislature into three branches is the great barrier against violent and sudden changes ; the guarantee of popular representation, and of the separation of the other powers from the right of legislation. It is an obstacle which faction cannot hope to subdue, except by a total overthrow of the laws, and which gives a due proportion of power to every order in the state.

The happy complication of checks and counterpoises—of forces and resistances—has made the English constitution the master-piece of human invention. Unfinished as it was before the revolution of 1688, it was still superior to the government of any other country ; and enlightened men have spoken of it with praise, even in its days of imperfec-



chemistry, mineralogy, botany have proceeded, and must still proceed; and if the mathematical sciences have not rigorously followed a similar process, it is because they depend upon reasoning, not upon perception. It is thus also that political knowledge must advance; and the world appears, at this moment, to have attained only the second period of its progress, in the most important of all human concerns.

That these observations are not the result of idle speculation or of enthusiasm, the progress of policy in the New Continent sufficiently shows. There we may see the first improvement made upon a constitution which, for ages, has been the most enlightened in the world. There hereditary equality establishes one single class in society; and that class produces sovereign, nobles, judges, representatives, the executive, the judicial, and the three branches of the legislative power. There, too, one part of the people serves to balance the other; and the moderating power, descending from its brief authority, returns again into the bosom of the maddening multitude which it was lately bound to check. Yet the American constitution allows the only right which may be lost, as it was won, by superior industry and worth, the hereditary accumulation of property.

If, from what is here stated, any conclusion were drawn unfavorable to the establishment of hereditary rights in England, the intention of these remarks would be much perverted. It would be as wicked to destroy them there as to dissolve the House of Representatives in America; as bad as to tear the Iceland moss from off its rocks, in the hope of supplanting it by the vines of Constantia. Hereditary royalty and nobility correspond with the present condition of the British nation, and have lost the bitterness which they have in other realms. But the Americans can afford to follow England, and it is possible that they may find the necessary counterpoises to ambition and turbulence in a single order of society. The event must show whether the British have found the truest limits of practical virtue, and have best understood the degree of liberty which a rich and powerful nation may hope to enjoy. Should the American

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constitution be proof against the shock of ages, and the slow pace of corruption, posterity must own that it is the best and the wisest. And then let Englishmen rejoice that their children are happier than themselves; and hope that this example, seconded by the most favorable situation which an empire ever held upon the globe, may help them to rise again to the supremacy of happiness and freedom which they have so long enjoyed.

But, let what will happen, may no speculations and ravings after theoretical perfection mislead men to undertake what their virtue cannot bear; and may their wisdom guard them against such disastrous innovations as those which have lately been attempted. Whatever improvements are desired, let them spring up like the tree of the forest in its native soil; not forced or hastened in their growth, but prudently committed to the slow and silent progress of time, by which all things ripen or decay. It is thus that the species grows wiser and better every day, and that a tendency to increasing good is maintained among the generations of men.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

## ON INTELLECT.

## PART I.

On the Causes which develop and modify the Powers of Intellect among Nations.

ALTHOUGH the powers of intellect have already been considered as modifying various attributes of society, they deserve to be examined anew in the provinces where they are principally known to preside.

The powers of the understanding may be divided into two classes; the useful, and the agreeable. To the former belong all those without which we should be unable to form just notions of any concerns of life; to the latter, those which embellish existence, and give a charm to cultivated society.

However ill-defined the boundaries of these powers may appear, it is easy to perceive that the severer and more useful class belongs to pride; while that which is ornamental is the companion of vanity.

The faculties, then, which prevail in cold and sterile countries, where the inhabitants are compelled to labour, and the nation must think and struggle to be great, are the reflective; while fancy is the predominant quality in regions blessed with the means of fertility and splendour. These faculties have their distinct influence in the various departments of knowledge; and though it cannot be said that any region of thought is altogether dependent upon one single power of mind, though poetry is the province of fancy and philosophy of reason; yet poetry without reason and philosophy without fancy, would be dreary wastes. rationally the latter may be, it could not be

without imagination ; and the former would be wilder than madness, if reason did not frequently tame its extravagant sallies.

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## PART II.

On the Development and Progress of the different Modifications of Intellect among Nations.

IN whatever circumstances men are placed, some share of thought is indispensable to their existence. But where the means of life are easily secured, reflection and combination become less necessary, and are soon succeeded by indolence of mind, or else by some light and sportive imagery which merely amuses it, and rushes as spontaneously into its unoccupied recesses, as air into a vacuum.

When obstacles are great and reflection must be constant in proportion to the difficulty of surmounting them, even imagination, as soon as it has leisure to develop itself, partakes in the same qualities of constancy and depth.

For these reasons poetry has had the precedence of every literary pursuit, in almost every nation, and was in a flourishing condition long before severer studies had been thought of. Our first perceptions are sufficient stores for its imagery ; and our first passions supply it with sufficient animation. The tropes of early men are bold, and their figures of speech impassioned ; their feasts and ceremonies have always been accompanied by poetry, and by its sister art, music. The gods were worshipped in rhythm before any rational exposition of their omnipotence had been made in prose. Heroes were praised in verse and sung, before the facts of history were recorded ; and soldiers were roused to martial enthusiasm in metre, before prosaic inquiry was made into the military arts.

The rashness of untamed passion communicated itself to the language which expressed it, and burst out in tropes and figures which sedate feelings would not have invented.

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held as contrasts; and similes, hyperboles, personifications, were embodied in a peculiar language of their own. The art, indeed, must have been simple at first, and was probably confined to individual inspiration. Thus the song or ode, or, as it is generally called, lyric poetry, was one of the earliest known.

Much time must have elapsed before the introduction of the more complicated modes of impassioned poetry. Man must have lived in society; events must have been recorded; something more various than the interests of individuals or of families must have been known, before its true domain, the drama, could have been cultivated. In the same manner, though the animated songs and recitals composed by the first poetic recorders of the exploits of heroes might almost be held as fragments of epopœa; yet the distance between such rude beginnings and the *Iliad* is immense.

Another species of poetry which belongs to emotion, is the descriptive; for description is the expression of feelings which arise from the contemplation of nature. Admiration too nearly allied to passion, not to burst out in figurative language.

One of the last pieces of poetry which would be cultivated, is the didactic. Philosophy must have made considerable progress before it could find its way into metre; and versified abstraction denotes that poetry has become an art. Gray's Ode, 'Perdition seize thee, ruthless king,' might have been felt in any period of society; but Pope's 'Essay on Man' could not have been conceived until man had been studied.

Until emotion has, in some measure, subsided; until passion has spent itself in exaggerations, philosophy must be content to wait. In the countries first inhabited, the splendour of the heavens and the smaller utility of man, turned the attention towards physical, more than towards moral philosophy; and valuable observations were made in astronomy and physics, before the human heart was studied, or even thought a worthy subject of curiosity.

The sublimest reach which the mind can make is to know itself; unless it be to add to that knowledge an ac-

quaintance with what is still more noble and varied, the heart. The philosophy of the mind is the study of man in his contemplative state; but psychology considers him in action and in passion.

The country and the age of imaginative literature are generally productive of the fine arts; and music, painting, sculpture are the usual companions of impassioned poetry. To philosophy belong other arts, which, though not so brilliant or so beautiful, are more solid and more useful—the arts of industry.

Imagination may excel in any soil and climate: its bolder flights, however, belong to proud nations. Judgment is a quality of the proud. Another power, taste, inferior to both of these, is an appendage to vanity. The Greeks and the French, compared to the Romans and the British, are examples of this assertion.

The Hebrews are universally allowed to be the most ancient poets known; and as on this subject they derived no instructions from the Egyptians, they may pass for the inventors of poetic diction. But as they wrote from inspiration, they must not be judged according to the rules which are applicable to the poets of other nations. Nevertheless, the general laws which act upon the human mind are discernible even in their productions.

Hebrew poetry is characterised by boldness more than by correctness; by a profusion of imagery; by crowded metaphors, which burst from minds more warm than cultivated; and by the abrupt transitions which accompany uncontrolled emotion. It seems to be the effusion of an incoercible spirit, which found it more easy to speak thus, than to be silent. Not a single poetical figure that can be imagined is a stranger to it; and the most sublime are the most abundant. That sublimity, too, is of the grandest species; for it consists in thought, expressed in the most concise language. ‘Let there be light, and there was light.’ The most magnificent objects of nature are painted in the simplest words; and though a repetition of the same idea frequently occurs, prolixity is its last feature. Not all the poets of the world have produced anything so grand, so



majestic, and so bold, yet so graceful, as the frequent *protopœia* of the Hebrews.

The form of poetry that abounds most in the scriptures is the simplest, and the earliest, the lyric. Many specimens of it are scattered through the books which have another end in view; and other compositions, as the psalms of David, professedly belong to this order. In the elegiac may be ranked the Lamentations of Jeremiah. The Song of Solomon is an example of pastoral poetry; and the Book of Proverbs is didactic. But here the poetry of the Hebrews stopped, and the *epopœa* and the drama\* were unknown to them. Their state of social improvement did not enable them to rise to a complete acquaintance with the heart of man. It was no small proof of wisdom in so early a nation that they could give such precepts as are contained in the Proverbs; but the philosophy of the soul was still beyond their comprehension.

Although the Hebrew writers spoke by divine impulse, and might be supposed exempt from human laws, they still followed that which is the most general and imperious. He who raised in them the spirit by which they were led, might have given them all the treasures of the world to enrich their poetry: but instead of that, they drew their imagery, as all other poets did, from the circumstances in which they lived; and the land of their birth furnished them with ample allusions. Thus Judea, often parched with drought in the summer, taught them forcibly to feel the want of water, and the exquisite delight of returning showers. The most sublime of their writers, Isaiah†, says, ‘In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert, and the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water. In the habitations of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes!’ But Judea was moreover a hilly country; and, as soon as the waters did fall, they rushed with mighty violence from above. ‘Deep calleth

\* Some say that the origin of dramatic poetry may be traced back to the Book of Job. Certainly nothing can be more dramatic than his sufferings and his complaints.

† Isaiah xxxv. 6, 7.

‘ unto deep at the noise of the water-spouts ; all thy waves  
& thy billows are gone over me\*.’ The two mountains,  
Lebanon and Carmel, furnish frequent images of beauty ;  
and the tremendous shocks of nature, earthquakes, whirl-  
winds, darkness, tempests of hail and thunder, are described  
with their most awful appearances. In more subdued  
moments, agriculture and pasturage gave a tincture to  
Hebrew poetry ; but none of its embellishments were de-  
rived from the refinements of luxury.

A people that had made such progress in lyric poetry,  
could not be ignorant of music. Accordingly this art is  
found on many occasions a principal companion in feasts  
and ceremonies. The greatest lyric poet of the Hebrews  
was also the greatest musician ; and the son of David,  
though not himself a performer, was a professed admirer of  
the art. Even Moses was instructed by Pharaoh’s daughter ;  
and innumerable instances occur in the Scriptures of the  
union of music and prophecy. The superiority in this art  
was not so great as in poetry. Poetry comes from an im-  
pulse of the mind, and requires but little assistance from  
the kindred arts ; but music receives addition from almost  
every branch of knowledge, and owes its choicest sounds to  
the sciences of pneumatics, mechanics, and acoustics.

The Jews do not seem to have made any proficiency in  
the other branches of literature, or the arts. In prose they  
have left nothing comparable to what remains of their  
poetry. In sculpture and painting they have bequeathed  
no monuments ; and were it not for their inspired poetry,  
they would deserve no place among literary nations. The  
merit of their graven images, as pieces of art, cannot now  
be estimated.

This nation presents a singular contrast to its instructors.  
The Egyptians were not poetical ; but they accomplished  
many useful undertakings. It is to them that the learned  
attribute the invention of alphabetic symbols ; and their  
claim to being the earliest geometers is undisputed.  
Arithmetic grew up among them, and astronomy owes to  
them much of its early progress.

\* Psalm xlii., 7.

The overflowing of the Nile imposed upon this people the necessity of being able to measure again the ground, from which every landmark had been swept away. But the processes by which this is performed are not now considered as complicated; and a little knowledge of geometry is sufficient for the measurement of plain surfaces. The forty-seventh proposition of the first book of Euclid appears to have been unknown to them; unless Pythagoras be accused of having stolen from them the demonstration for which he offered up a hecatomb to the gods. Neither, without a similar supposition as to Thales, can they be allowed to have known how to inscribe a right-angled triangle in a circle. Yet geometrical figures were used by them for every purpose of expressing their scientific opinions, and none more than circles and triangles. The efforts which the Egyptians made were confined to the necessity in which they originated.

The strongest proof, however, that these sciences really were known to them, is the progress which astronomy had made. Almost all the inhabitants of the countries near the Nile, the Euphrates, the Indus, and the Ganges, claim the honor of being astronomical discoverers; and it is probable that all their pretensions are founded in truth. But, as far as we can now ascertain, it appears that, at a period when other nations had but imperfect ideas on this subject, the Egyptians could predict many phenomena with accuracy. They knew that the duration of the earth's annual revolution round the sun was three hundred and sixty-five days and six hours; and that the planets Mercury and Venus had a similar motion, but in different periods.

But an application which the Egyptians, as well as all the early nations, made of astronomy, was to predict the fate of men. This science was called judicial astrology; and many are the disputants for the honor of the invention. Magic also was studied in Egypt; and Hermes has left an equal reputation in this art as in chemistry, which then was nothing more than the most absurd alchemy. The same spirit pervaded the art of healing; and the practitioners always added the study of the former to their medical

learning. Medicine, however, attracted the peculiar attention of government; and legal recipes were appointed for each disorder. The climate could not be at all times equally salubrious, on account of the periodical inundations; and the health of the people became a material object. The fine arts made but small progress among the Egyptians; and the specimens which have come down to modern times are rude sketches of imitation.

Sculpture appears, with great probability, to have been practised among them at an early date; but the style of their productions was altogether barbarous. The technical accuracy with which they divided the human body into twenty-one parts and a quarter, was more in the tone of geometry than of taste. But the most extraordinary result was obtained; for each of these parts, when executed according to their rules, so exactly symmetrised with the rest, that, though the work of different artists, the whole appeared to come from the hand of one man. Immensity seemed to be their measure of perfection in every thing. The statues of Sesostris and his queen, which this monarch placed before the temple of Vulcan, were thirty cubits high; and those of his four children, twenty. The dimensions of the pyramids and of the sphynx are further proofs of their predilection for size; and have astonished every traveller, from Herodotus down to the present day. Considered as early practitioners of the fine arts, the Egyptians deserve admiration; but they have been so far surpassed by later nations, that they cannot be estimated in any light but as extraordinary beginners. No spirit of true imitation, no fire of genius guided them. There was no motion, no thought in the figures which seemed to be copies of fresh mummies, rather than of life. Their architecture had the same defects; and they universally wanted taste and finish.

The nations of the East which followed the Egyptians, are marked by one common feature, which pervades their whole intellectual character; the predominancy of fancy over reason, and an attachment to what may be, in preference to what is. The Chaldeans, more celebrated for their philosophy than for any other branch of literature, were

wholly addicted to imaginative doctrines, and believed in magic, incantations, and astrology. Even the facts of astronomy they so converted into the means of imposture, that their name was afterwards applied to all the professors of these mischievous arts. The same general characteristics belong also to the Babylonians and the Assyrians.

The Persians were more poetical than any nation that has yet been mentioned. Their poetry abounds in sublime and varied imagery, and in the tenderest pathos. The productions of their poets are known to the lowest classes of society, and men of every description delight in them. But the other branches of literature have not been cultivated with equal success. Fictitious history, indeed, is a favorite composition; but real history has been neglected. Their acquaintance with science is very limited; neither have they at any time been renowned for their proficiency in painting or sculpture. The ruins of several ancient cities speak much in favor of their architectural skill. But the most complete picture of the Persian mind is to be found in the Zendavista, which contains all the theory of their religion, as said to be established by Zoroaster. This theological philosopher maintained the existence of two principles, light and darkness, good and evil, which will be at perpetual variance with each other, until the final triumph of the former shall be assured by the mediation of the Divine Being. Various orders of gods and demons, more or less perfect as their origin is nearest to the fountain of good, emanate from him; and the human soul is a particle of light issuing from his nature, destined to return to its source again, and there to partake of immortality. Matter is the most distant emanation from the fountain of light, and consequently opaque; but when gradually refined, it also will return to its source. This very short sketch is sufficient to show how fanciful was the philosophy of the Persians, and how little the progress of reason had done to correct their errors. An inquiry into the state of Indian arts and literature, however ancient they may be, would lead to a similar conclusion; and imagination, more than reason, appears, in every instance, to be the predominant quality of mind among

But the eastern nation from which the most information may be derived, is that which, at one period, was the most cultivated and improved. Though, before the age of Mahomet, the Arabians were in the most complete ignorance, they showed a natural liveliness of mind in solving enigmatical questions, and in the art of divination. They were distinguished also for their imagination and their poetry, and nothing was more admired than a facility of figurative diction, even in common conversation. A distinguished poet was so great an honor, that the tribe to which he belonged was congratulated upon the possession of a person so privileged by nature. Festivals and entertainments were given to him, at which the women, dressed in their best attire, sung the happiness of their society, who had a poet to record their actions. A general assembly was held every year at Ocadh, during which the prize of poetry was disputed, and the successful production was preserved in the king's treasury. Yet no work of any length appeared for a considerable time; nor was the prosody of the language settled until the reign of Haroun Al Raschid. The coming of Mahomet, and the martial spirit which he infused into the nation, disturbed the peaceful Muses. But when the conquest of all the neighbouring countries was completed, the art revived, and general literature was more encouraged than ever. Under the sixth caliph, Muavias, who lived about half a century after Mahomet, the respect for intellectual superiority had become so great, that a robber, condemned to death, was pardoned, on account of some extempore verses which he made; and for the first time a sentence of the Mussulman was revoked. Nothing could exceed the generosity of Haroun Al Raschid to the literati who accompanied him in his pilgrimages to Mecca; and, upon the whole, no nation has ever honored the works of poetic imagination more than the Arabs.

The eloquence of the Arabians was of the same nature as their poetry. Their orations were declaimed before the people whenever the object was to excite them to any enterprise, and were addressed more to the passions than to the ~~tanding.~~ Frequent instances, indeed, occur which

prove that they possessed great powers of eloquence, and could speak in elegant and forcible language upon all the subjects which formed their usual occupations.

So much praise cannot be bestowed upon the philosophy of the Arabians as upon their poetry and their oratory. By some, this branch of knowledge is said to have been very ancient among them ; by others, its antiquity is denied. It is certain that, prior to Mahomet, civilisation was in a low condition ; and, even long after his time, it had not made much progress. The princes of the Abasidean dynasty were the first who really encouraged literature ; and Bagdad became the seat of the Muses and of philosophy, while Bassora and Bochara, Alexandria and Cairo, Morocco and Fez, together with many cities of Spain, were celebrated for their schools of learning.

The propensity of this people to disfigure every reasonable doctrine by some extravagance of fancy, is strongly proved by their conduct towards the philosophy which they adopted from Europeans. It was among them that knowledge found an asylum at the subversion of the Roman empire, and if reason had been sufficiently mature, they would at once have adopted and improved the learning which they thus imbibed. But they were far from doing this ; and there was not a single branch of science which they did not corrupt in such a manner as to take from it almost every mark by which it could be recognised when it travelled back again to its native seats.

When success permitted the Mahometan monarchs to repose a little from their warlike labours, they turned their thoughts to the arts and sciences, disregarding the barbarous edicts by which Mahomet had sent them into exile. The ignorance of their own subjects made foreign assistance necessary ; and the works of Grecian literature were translated into Syriac by the learned Christians then residing at Bagdad. The first attempts were made under Al Mansor, who was prompted by a desire to introduce the Grecian practice of physic. His efforts were seconded by successive caliphs ; and Galen, Aristotle, Euclid, Ptolemy, and others became known in the empire of Islam.



the disgrace of this great protector of learning, it must be recorded that he ordered the original manuscripts to be destroyed as soon as the translations were finished by the caliphs of Africa.

A long list of names might be selected from among the celebrated Saracens of that epocha, as Al Kendi, Al Farabi, Al Ashari, Avicenna, &c. ; and, most of all, Averroes, who was compared to Aristotle himself. It is remarkable that all these men were physicians, no less than philosophers ; in such high repute was the study of medicine in the Mahometan countries. Yet this art was sadly turned aside from what it was in the writings of Galen and Hippocrates. The Mahometans, instead of pursuing the path of observation and experience, gave themselves up to disquisitions ; and, as their religion forbade the practice of anatomy, all they could do was to inspect the skeleton. Nevertheless, they remarked some new diseases, particularly the small-pox ; but the moment they deserted their Grecian models, they fell into the grossest quackery, mixed up with astrology and uroscopy. Chemistry, too, was indebted to them for the discovery of many pharmaceutic preparations, and for considerable improvements in the art of conducting operations, as the names both of the instruments and the products declare. But these advantages came mixed with so many alchemical extravagancies and mysteries, that much of the obligation which modern science otherwise would have to them, is lost. Astronomy is also indebted to them for many improvements, as the determination of the obliquity of the ecliptic ; the measure of a degree of the meridian on the borders of the Red Sea ; and an improved theory of the sun, replete with accurate and important deductions. But the science was disfigured by astrology, as much as it was improved by observation.

The mathematics were much cultivated by them ; yet the doctrines of the Greeks were more frequently corrupted than improved. Many of their sages pretended that they ~~could interpret the language~~ of birds ; while others imposed relations of supernatural visions, and distributed their charms



and amulets among their dupes. In metaphysics, if so it can be called, they reasoned with subtlety, according to the mode of the Peripatetics ; but framed a system so mystical as to be incomprehensible.

The lively errors of the Greeks were prostituted to become the abject aids of Mahometanism, and to rivet the chains of its sanguinary superstitions. Principally applied to theology, Arabian philosophy had little to do with the mind and heart ; and what it has added to ethics is so insignificant, that it may be forgotten without prejudice to the modern world.

One of the most characteristic productions belonging to any age or country is the Arabian Nights : the most romantic and the richest imagination, the most excursive invention produced those amusing fictions. All that fairy imagery and enchantment can do, is profusely employed in them, with the splendid decorations of oriental scenery. Gold, silver, jewels, perfumes, wanton through them with wit and witchcraft ; and the most seducing picture of manners and characters make them particularly interesting. They do not, however, belong to the highest class of moral painting ; to that in which the soul is pourtrayed with all its strongest impressions ; and they bear the type of the nation in which they were conceived. There is more imagination in the philosophy which they inculcate, than philosophy in the imagination which embellishes them. They are evidently Oriental not European.

In a word, the present state of knowledge owes much, though it has many reproaches to make to the Arabians. If some of the Greek manuscripts were destroyed by them, and many of the sciences disfigured, both the one and the other were preserved at a time when they had no other refuge. And better is it that they were thus saved, and returned thus changed, than that all should have been lost ; and that the world was spared the labour of a second invention.

But all nations, it may be said, the northern as well as the southern, are poetical before they are philosophical ; and imagination is everywhere an earlier faculty

than reason. The Celts and the Scandinavians had their bards and their scalds, before they had moralists; and the honors which were paid to them prove the high veneration in which they were held. The same simple form of impassioned poetry belonged to them, as to southern poets; and they related the stories of their ancient heroes in songs. Their themes were generally valour and warlike enthusiasm; and they were deemed such essential officers of state, that the kings of the Scandinavian countries never were unaccompanied by scalds, to whom they gave precedence of all the other courtiers, and whose crimes were pardoned in favour of their muse. These men were long the only historians of their country; and Charlemagne is said to have ordered their songs to be collected as authentic records. The bards of the Celts were the same as the scalds of the Scandinavians, and held in equal veneration. But all these early nations approached nearer to the easterns in poetry, than in philosophy; and the physical sciences were unknown to them. Their doctrines, too, were austere, not voluptuous; and their whole moral system was to worship the gods, to do good, and to practise fortitude.

When intellect began to be matured in Europe, it took a different direction from that which it had hitherto followed. In other countries it had been called into action, as it were, piecemeal; and many of the faculties had lain dormant. In one nation eloquence was unknown; in another sculpture; in another painting. But in Greece all were cultivated, together with many others which never had been thought of. It was there that, for the first time since his formation, the intellectual being was complete.

Poetry was an early art among the Greeks; and imagination soon had free room to extend itself. When the first difficulties were overcome, their past exploits served as the theme of their song; and the fabulous ages, or those which immediately succeeded them, had their bards.

He who was called the most ancient of poets is also the most accomplished. But he is perfect, not merely in his perceptions, in the powers of fancy, in the observation and description of what he beholds; he is still more admirable;

perhaps, for the manner in which he combines his story, and maintains his characters. It is not in the nature of the mind that such a production as the *Iliad* should be a first attempt. It comes too near the state which succeeding efforts have not been able to surpass, and bears every characteristic of the maturity of art. It has served as the standard to which all similar compositions have been referred ; and from which the laws of the epopœa have been derived. Nothing has been added to it, even in idea, to make it more complete : and its beauties are such as could not belong to a rude essay. As well might it be said that Persepolis was built before a single stone had been dug out of the earth, as that no poems had preceded the time of Homer. The plan is too vast, too firmly knit together ; the details are too well suited to the general conception ; the whole is too compact not to have had a prototype. Had it been a less finished model of art and design, it might have better passed for the earliest monument of Grecian poetry ; and its perfection is the strongest argument against its originality.

But, be that as it may, the works of Homer are characterised by all the features of an early age ; they are replete with imagery, and with imagery taken from the commonest objects of nature ; they abound in strong expressions, and simplicity, without the aid of meretricious ornament ; they paint the native feelings of the soul, without disguise or sophistry ; and with all the liberty of genius, unsuspecting that any trammels ever can be put upon its boldness : they give a faithful, living picture of their own times, when neither vice nor virtue was refined ; they are inventive beyond the works of almost any poet ; and, what is more surprising, they are conducted with a degree of judgment which has never been surpassed.

A principal merit of the Grecian bard is his skill in delineating manners and characters ; but the time in which he lived afforded him more opportunity for observing the former. Manners of whatever kind are always interesting ; and the most advanced society contemplates with pleasure, the habits, thoughts, and customs of uncivilised men. Their ignorance, their simplicity, are fascinating objects of study

and even the unskilful mode in which their affairs are conducted amuses. But the individual savage is not so interesting, and does not offer such a fit subject for moral portraiture. Nothing can be more intimate than the acquaintance to which Homer introduces his readers, with all the customs of antiquity. But his individuals are not so complete; and some poets who have followed him, have been more successful in drawing pictures of the mind and soul.

This defect, however, does not belong to the great father of poetry. It proceeds from the little development which human qualities had reached in his time. The combinations of thought and feeling which he did not see, he could not paint; and his statues are incomplete, because the originals were so. As far as the condition of man allowed him to penetrate, his personages are as they ought to be; individuals distinct from each other, and separated by their own appropriate features. Achilles, Hector, Ajax, Paris, Agamemnon, Menelaus, Helen, Andromache, are each as much one person, as they could be, were they living men and women; and such as they are in the onset of their existence, such do they continue to be to the end. In these respects the genius of Homer is admirable; and if he has been surpassed by a later poet, who has given a fuller likeness of man, it is because the models which moderns had before their eyes were more accomplished.

According to the remains of Grecian poetry now extant, the lyric might be supposed to have been preceded by the epic; a thing of which no example could be adduced in any other country where poetry was indigenous. But the names of Amphion, Linus, Musæus, Orpheus, and others, contradict this opinion; and, though their writings are no longer in existence, their reputations ensure the fact that, in Greece, as elsewhere, lyric poetry, be it song or ode, had priority of every other metrical composition.

The scalds or bards of no country enjoyed a more enviable existence than the rhapsodists of the Greeks. They could travel where they pleased, and were welcome everywhere, as their song could enliven the public festival, or

give solemnity to the ceremonies of religion. They could dwell in the midst of danger, and behold in safety the tumult of battle, or the city sacked and plundered. In every situation they were respected; and, having contemplated all the passions and contests of men, could retire to the cavern, and there compose the songs which were to instruct and charm them. The greatest heroes did not disdain the lyre; and the most distinguished performers rose to the highest honors. Achilles sung the glory of departed warriors now forgotten; Amphion reigned in the city whose walls his music and his verse had raised; Orpheus obtained admission into the palace of Pluto; Anaxagoras bestowed a part of the kingdom of Argos on the poet and physician Melampus, whose descendants reigned there to the sixth generation. The circumstances and situation of Greece, more than of any other country, contributed to make the muses honored.

The brilliant age of lyric poetry, however, as now remembered, succeeded the time of Homer by nearly two centuries, and lasted about two hundred years. It was filled by the successive production of many poets, among whom the names of Sappho, Alcæus, Pindar, and Anacreon, never will be forgotten. It is remarkable that, with the exception of the Bœotian Pindar, and the Sicilian Stersichorus, all these lyrists were born in Asia, or in the islands of the Ægean sea, where the climate could best inspire the raptures and voluptuousness of the Grecian ode.

Anacreon and Pindar may here be considered as the fathers of lyric poetry, each in his separate walk. The former was the votary of pleasure: the divinities whom he sung were Bacchus and Venus; and he delighted in licentiousness. The tone and manner of Pindar were more dignified, and his language was suited to more elevated subjects: but both belong to an age in which the heart was not yet thoroughly known; and, in this respect, they might have been earlier than Homer.

The age of lyric poetry was succeeded by that of the drama: but philosophy had made great progress in the interval; and the seven sages had preceded the three tragic

poets by nearly a century and a half. Between the times of Homer and Æschylus, the moral state of Greece had changed; and her social condition had been enlarged. Lycurgus had given laws to Sparta, Solon to Athens; schools and sects of philosophy had been founded. The material world began to be better understood; and the spiritual and imperishable cause of all things was more duly appreciated than he had ever been before.

The most magnificent walk of the drama is tragedy, as it exhibits all the passions and motions of the human soul. And such was the end which it attained in the hands of Æschylus, about five hundred years before the birth of Christ. This poet had all the qualities of an early writer: he was enthusiastic, strong, and bold; profuse of metaphors; picturing every image of the soul by some figurative expression, and delighting in gigantic magnificence. The effects which he produced were more violent than are recorded of any tragic poet: but they were accomplished too much by physical means, by the machinery and decorations of the theatre, and by setting before the eyes of his spectators the furies and spectres which might have been otherwise introduced. In short, his palpable representations of passion were so strong, that the magistrates of Athens issued orders to reduce the number of the chorus from fifty to fifteen.

To Æschylus, Sophocles succeeded; and the progress of tragedy was extremely rapid. It became a more moral composition; and the sorrows of the mind assumed the place of bodily distresses. Although this tragedian painted men rather as they ought to be, than as they were, yet his standard of perfection was not so far above reality as to leave his pictures ideal. He had juster notions of the human heart. But the last of the Greek tragedians was he who had the deepest knowledge of it; and thus the art continued to improve in every succeeding hand through which it passed\*.

These great dramatic poets were the friends, the dis-

\* The Lacedæmonians had no tragedies, nor, indeed, any expression of passion.

ciples, and often, too, the instructors of the most renowned philosophers; and could draw their knowledge from the valuable stores of Anaxagoras and Socrates. But Grecian comedy had no such resources; and the state of society hardly permitted its existence. None of the familiar relations which give rise to comic sentiments and situations were known in those times. The Athenians, indeed, had strong and lively notions of the ridiculous; but they were without the moral delicacy which social intercourse alone can give. The influence of women was not sufficiently ascendant to confer true grace and ease upon comedy. Whatever might have been the mind of Aristophanes, it was reduced to take its tone from the state of things which it contemplated. The Athenian people, however, who heard with rapture the strains of Sophocles and Euripides, listened to his buffooneries, because they were written according to their wishes. The enlightened sensibility to moral beauty was still defective; and the language had not yet a word to express the general idea of what moderns understand by virtue.

The eloquence of the Greeks was called into action at an early period; and the opinion of the great Roman orator is, that the art of public speaking was in high esteem before the siege of Troy. Of the eloquence which belongs to poetry, many monuments exist in Homer; but that which is truly efficacious is that which is exercised in public discussions on affairs of state.

Democracy is favorable to political eloquence. Athens was the city in which it attained its highest perfection; and the age of Pericles, so full of all the glories of his country, was that in which it flourished. Gorgias of Leontium was one of the first who taught the art methodically; and he was followed by many others, as by Isocrates, the preceptor of Xenophon, and of Demosthenes. Almost every statesman was an orator; for it was impossible to take a part in the government without eloquence. Harangues were generally pronounced in the presence of the people; and as the object was to excite, more than to convince, they were more impassioned than ratiocative. On great occasions, indeed, the Athenians could listen to argument; and



for this reason, Demosthenes frequently succeeded against his opponents. The entire liberty which every citizen had of delivering his opinions, maintained a succession of orators in every period of Athenian prosperity ; but the later were generally more argumentative than the earlier speakers. Upon the whole, the eloquence of Greece must be considered as more impassioned and imaginative than the eloquence of modern nations.

But the ascendancy of imagination over reason in Grecian intellect is most discernible in philosophy, particularly when it considers the operations of mind. In fabulous times, severity of judgment is not to be expected ; and it would be useless to examine the tenets of Linus, Orpheus, or of any who preceded the age of Solon, which was that of the seven sages, and that in which the poetical condition of the country was entirely changed. The foundation of all the philosophy of the Greeks was laid by Thales, the Milesian ; who, having travelled into Egypt, took back with him the knowledge which he had there acquired upon geometry and astronomy, and very much astonished his countrymen by his accurate prediction of an eclipse. He was the founder of the most ancient sect of Greece, the Ionic. These men studied the formation of the universe, the nature of things, and physics in general. They supposed one element to be the principle of all things ; but they did not agree as to what that element was. Some preferred water ; others air ; others a mixture of various principles. Anaximander admitted infinity as the universal principle ; but what infinity was is not clear. He was well skilled in geography ; and is said to have invented the sundial, and to have discovered the obliquity of the ecliptic. He conceived the stars to be globular collections of air and fire, borne about in the spheres in which they are placed, and animated by portions of the divinity. According to him the sun has the highest place in the heavens, the stars the lowest ; and the earth is an immoveable globe which stands in the midst of the universe. Anaximenes went still farther : he held air to be God ; and taught that all minds were air ; that the sun and moon were fiery bodies whose



form was that of a circular plate; and that the stars, also fiery substances, were fixed in the heavens as nails in a crystalline plate. But the most remarkable of the Ionic sect was Anaxagoras of Clazomenæ, the preceptor of Euripides, Pericles, Socrates, and Themistocles. He conceived the material world to have once been a confused mass, consisting of different kinds of molecules; and that similar bodies were at length generated by similar particles, from which they assumed their character. He supposed the active principle to be different from the material mass, an infinite and intelligent cause, which, communicating motion to all things, produced the various forms of nature. The predecessors of Anaxagoras had confounded mind and matter; but he taught that they were separate, and assigned a better cause for the existence of the world. But his doctrines did not suit the understanding of his countrymen, who, considering them as impious, condemned him to death, from which he was saved only by the interference of Pericles. His great offence was promulgating sounder opinions concerning the gods; and asserting that the sun was an inanimate substance, not a divinity. He ridiculed also some Athenian priests who drew ill omens from the sacrifice of a ram that had but one horn. The example of this great man shows how little the Athenians could support true philosophy; since, for having been more rational than they were, he was driven into exile. He retired to Lampsacus, where he passed the remainder of his days in instructing youth, and died respected and wealthy. 'It is not I,' said he, 'who have lost the Athenians, but the Athenians who have lost me.'

Out of the Ionic arose the most remarkable sect of antiquity, were it only on account of the person by whom it was founded. The two principal instructors of Socrates were Anaxagoras and Archelaus, both Ionics. But the mind of this great man enabled him to rise above his masters; and taking advantage of the truths which they had taught, while he eliminated many of their errors, he added new and sublimer doctrines, and gave philosophy its true direction, by turning its inquiries towards the moral nature of man.

Socrates founded his opinions of religion upon natural appearances. The Supreme Being, himself invisible, is seen in his works, which speak at once his power, his wisdom, and his benevolence. He is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent; the creator and preserver of all things. Beside him, there were divinities of an inferior order, who superintended the common phenomena of nature, and the management of human affairs; and who were entitled to respect. The soul was allied to the Divine Being by a similarity of nature; and good men, after death, continued to exist in a state where they received the reward due to virtue. Thus it was that the system of morality which Socrates taught was raised upon the strong basis of religion; and its principles were inculcated as a law of God. But these doctrines, so superior to all which had preceded them, more moral and religious even than those of Anaxagoras, were still less acceptable to the Athenians; and factions arose in the peaceful regions of philosophy to overwhelm the foremost of the Grecian sages.

Athens contained, about this time, some professors of eloquence distinguished by the name of sophists, who made up for the want of wisdom by artificial phrases and false reasonings; and could dispute with plausibility upon either side of every question. The good sense of Socrates openly opposed them, and, for a time, prevailed: but their fury increased; and they employed the comic vein of Aristophanes, to overpower him with ridicule. After many attempts and long preparations of the public mind, the philosopher was accused of not acknowledging the gods which the state acknowledged, and of introducing new divinities. After the most iniquitous trial, he was condemned to death; and thus fell a victim to the superiority of his reason over the wild imaginations of his countrymen. The Athenians could not appreciate the man who spoke a language so much above their comprehension; but obeyed the specious and insidious arguments of the sophists, more suited to their understandings and their fancies. He was sacrificed to the truth and sublimity of his doctrines; and fell a glorious martyr to philosophy, a memorable example

of the danger which hangs over every man who, in times of madness and hallucination, too far outstrips the knowledge of his age and country. The Athenians could listen with delight to Anaximander, whose doctrines were not bound in by the severity of reason. Anaximenes pleased them for the same cause. But Anaxagoras was banished; and Socrates, the least heathen of the Grecian moralists, was condemned to death. Such were the consequences of the state of Athenian intellect, even so late as a century and a half after Solon.

Many other sects arose out of the Ionic, but are not worthy of much consideration. The most renowned of the disciples and defenders of Socrates was Plato. This extraordinary man, endowed with more brilliancy of imagination than depth of judgment, had been a poet in his youth. He had travelled much; and blended many of the tenets of foreign philosophers with those of his master. In Magna Græcia he had become acquainted with the Pythagorean system; in Egypt he had studied under the priests; but, by introducing what he had thus learned, he disfigured the Socratic philosophy.

The wisdom of Socrates was practical, that of Plato was speculative. According to the latter, our highest good consists in the knowledge and contemplation of the first good—mind, or God. Reason is the only power which can acquire a resemblance to the supreme good. Philosophers, admitted after death to divine entertainments, will look down with contempt on those who are contented with earthly shadows. Goodness and beauty consist in the knowledge of the first good and the first fair. His notions of mind and matter were, in some respect, the same as those of Anaxagoras; and, in others, more mysterious. He supposed that the Deity had formed the world after a perfect model eternally subsisting in his own mind, and endued it with a soul; that the universe is an animated being; that fire and earth had been first formed, and afterwards united by air and water; that from perfect parts one perfect whole of a perfect form was completed; that the elementary parts of the world were of regular geometrical forms; those of

earth being cubical, those of fire pyramidal, those of air octoedrical, and those of water icosædrical; that all these parts were adjusted in number, measure, and power, according to the laws of proportion; that the soul which animates this sphere is the cause of its motion; that the world will last for ever; but that it will accomplish certain periods, in which everything returns to its former situation. Certainly, in these short extracts, there is not anything which the wildest fancy would punish with death. For this reason, perhaps, the school of Plato long continued famous in Greece.

Plato possessed one of the most luxuriant minds of antiquity; but he did not labour in his proper vocation when he wandered into the paths of philosophy. He indulged in analogies too inaccurate for the sober steadiness of truth; and, in lieu of proceeding from facts to theories, he mounted backward, from theories to facts. He nevertheless inscribed over the entrance to his school, *Ουδεις αγεωμετρητος εισιτω*; 'Let no ungeometrical person enter here.' He has been frequently reproached for blending the language of mathematics with metaphysics, and attempting to express philosophical thoughts by diagrams, quantities, and proportions. Cicero says that, if Jupiter were to speak in Greek, he would borrow the style of Plato; and the great master of criticism, Aristotle, designates that style as holding the middle between verse and prose. His diction, however, is much diversified, being sometimes clear and simple to excess, at others turgid and bombastic. Sometimes, indeed, it seems as if he wished to conceal his real opinions by the obscurity of his language. It is true the subtlety of his speculations is often an excuse for want of perspicuity; but, on the other hand, he delighted in a show of extraordinary wisdom; and uselessly refined upon the mysteries and prodigies of his predecessors. His ambition was to found a sect; and he made a heterogeneous mixture of incongruous tenets, to which even his great mind could give no consistency, and which his followers have not been able to explain. Such were the qualities which made him the idol of the Athenians.

It was in the colder regions of Thrace, and remote from the vanity and levity of Athens, that a severer philosophy arose, together with a school, which, even in later times, has continued to influence the human mind. The birth-place of Aristotle was Stagyra, which he quitted at an early age, to repair to Athens, and hear the lessons of Plato. But his native disposition soon led him to differ from his master, and to establish principles in which reason had a greater share. For this cause he was accused of impiety before the Areopagus; and of having commemorated the virtues of his wife and friend with honors due only to the gods. He was condemned to death; but withdrew himself in time from the city, saying that, ‘as pears grew upon pear-trees, and figs upon fig-trees, so would Athenians always remain Athenians;’ and declaring that he would not give them an opportunity of repeating upon him the crime which they had already committed against philosophy in the person of Socrates. The writings of Aristotle are numerous and satisfactory. He treated almost every known subject; and, with such sense and judgment, that in all, except in practical morality, where he must yield to Socrates, he deserves to be ranked above all Grecian philosophers. Few, indeed, of any epocha can be preferred to him, as well for the extent as for the soundness of his views; and in proportion to their respective times, only one of his successors has done more to further the progress of the human mind. But the reason of the Athenians was not a proper judge of his, and it may be measured by the manner in which they received his instructions. It is perfectly characteristic of a vain nation, in such times as those, to condemn to death its three most rational and least imaginative philosophers, and to cling to those who deal in fancy.

Out of the abuse of Socratic philosophy grew the Cynic sect, whose founder, Antisthenes, was of a morose and cheerless temper, and of severe manners. But in the midst of his austerity, and the affected meanness of his dress, the penetrating mind of his master discovered his affectation; and he said, ‘Why are you thus ostentatious? Through your rags I see your vanity.’ He wore the coarsest garments,

allowed his beard to grow, and carried a wallet and a staff, confining himself to the simplest diet, and avoiding every indulgence. He despised the religion of his country, and maintained that the God of Nature was but one. The Greeks were fast sinking into effeminacy and vanity; and the Cynics hoped to oppose those vices by simplicity of manners, and the subjugation of passion. Although the first wish of these men might be to set an example of moderation and virtue, an affectation of singularity afterwards became an excitement, and it was gratifying to their vanity to be remarked for austerity, in a luxurious nation, still capable of admiring the eccentricities which were caused by talent. Their maxims were wise and good; and some of them would not be disapproved of even by Christians.

The most remarkable Cynic was Diogenes, whose principal characteristics were moroseness and vanity, a strange amalgamation of qualities, one of which rejects the world, the other courts it. But the former resulted from the disappointment of the latter; and had Diogenes at once met with the attention which he thought was due to him, he would have been in better harmony with his fellow-citizens. He practised, however, the most severe control over himself, but spoke his opinions without reserve. Respected by some, reviled by others, he preserved the utmost coolness, as well toward those who praised, as to those who ill-treated him, and spared neither the rich nor the powerful. Had this man appeared in a nation less addicted to bestow its wonder lightly, his vanity would not have had so much excitement; and he might have signalized himself less by a desire to differ from his fellow-citizens, than to excel them in true wisdom unostentatiously.

A branch of the Cynic sect was the Stoics, whose disciples practised even more than cynical severity, without affecting its mean and squalid garb. Their moral wisdom was not always in conformity with reason; and as it sometimes attempted to raise men above their nature, it could not fail to produce fanatics and hypocrites. It is remarkable that its founder, Zeno, who preached indifference to bodily pain, having broken his finger by a fall, at the age

of ninety-eight, and taken the accident as a summons from Nature, immediately strangled himself.

History had been little cultivated before the time of the Greeks. But, as the circumstances of nations changed, the observation of mankind became more enlarged. The connections which subsisted between the different states,—the wars which had been carried on in Asia, and even in Africa,—an increased spirit of traffic and of travelling, added much to the mass of historical and geographical knowledge. Popular traditions, genealogies, the migrations of tribes, began to be recorded; and, in the sixth century before Christ, the first known and authentic histories were compiled. Still, however, these were mixed with much fable, an exaggerated patriotism, and national vanity; in all of which it was the more easy to indulge, as the events of which they treated had been obscured by time.

Few historians had appeared in Greece before Herodotus, whom Cicero has styled the father of history. This man travelled over Egypt, Greece, and Italy, for the purpose of collecting knowledge concerning the origin of nations, and retired to Samos to compose his work. He appears to have been the first who possessed the art of connecting together the events which interest different countries, and of combining them in one whole. He is, among historians, what Homer is among poets, and Demosthenes among orators. Too fond of the marvellous, too discursive, too poetic for sober history, he is deficient in philosophy.

In hearing the history of Herodotus recited at the Olympic games, the mind of Thucydides was fired to emulate his fame. But he did not so servilely copy him as not to avoid many of his defects. During twenty years of exile, he travelled into the countries of all the enemies of Athens, and became a witness of the facts which he describes. Less desirous of pleasing than of instructing, he was less poetical than his predecessors, but more philosophical, diligent, and impartial, and his style is concise and forcible. Another remarkable historian was Xenophon, whose writings bear as many marks of belonging to the school of Socrates, as those of Thucydides do of the principles of Anaxagoras. Upon



the whole, though it cannot be said that imagination was a fault of the Greek historians, too much reason cannot be held as the defect of those who flourished in the early ages; and many qualifications are to be desired even in Thucydides and Xenophon.

However imaginative the study of medicine may have been in the time of Æsculapius, it became more rational under Hippocrates, and was inseparable from surgery and pathology. But little was known concerning the structure of the human body in his time: yet it is impossible not to be struck with the just views and profound meditations of this extraordinary philosopher. It does not appear that astronomy was cultivated at so early a period in Greece as in the brighter climates of the East; and most of the Grecian knowledge, without excepting even that which Pythagoras possessed, was brought from other countries.

But the arts in which the Greeks excelled all preceding nations, and in which they have still remained unrivalled, were painting and sculpture; and they seem to have been selected by nature as the people in whom all the circumstances which can contribute to perfection in the imitation of external beauty were united.

To delineate limbs and features—to distinguish what is most exquisite in the human form, is more a work of perception than of reason; and to endow an image of man with an appearance of sentiment, is the very poetry of the imitative arts. The painters and sculptors of Greece possessed the inappreciable advantage of having been preceded by a poet, who had given more admirable pictures of the corresponding faculties of mind and expressions of body, than had ever been conceived before. But even if they had not been thus instructed, they must themselves have discovered that dignity and benevolence of expression can be the consequence but of those sentiments reflected from the heart.

The Grecian climate did not require that the human form should be concealed under a weight of garments, and all its motions were laid bare to view. The connection between the shape of the limbs and strength, activity, health, at the different periods of life, were open to obser



tion, and might be studied in the most diversified models. The Grecian structure of body was intermediate between the Asiatic, and that which prevailed in the north of Europe. More mellow than the rough forms of colder climates,—less effeminate than those of the torrid zone, it united the gracefulness of the one with the manliness of the other, and often gave examples of both in their utmost perfection. Thus, then, with imagination to combine and embellish all they saw, it must have been a strange perversion which could have prevented them from becoming the first of painters and of sculptors.

That former nations were not unacquainted with painting is certain; but the first great step toward perfection was made in Greece. Apollodorus of Athens discovered the principle of beauty; and, before him, as Pliny observes, no picture had been produced which could continue to please upon examination. To him succeeded Zeuxis, Timanthes, Parrhasius, and others, all renowned for their respective excellencies; and finally Apelles, who united every species of merit, and who was more highly esteemed than any painter of antiquity. He was the friend of Alexander the Great, who ordered that none other should attempt to paint his likeness, and who bestowed upon him a favorite mistress, Campaspe. From the conjectures which the most able and experienced critics have formed, however, Grecian painters, although perfect masters of invention, grace, character, and design, appear to have been deficient in composition, which constitutes the highest excellence of the art.

To judge by the rarity with which great sculptors have appeared, it would seem that to animate marble is the most difficult of all the imitative arts. Painters, poets, musicians, actors, have lived in every age; but, since the days of Phidias, fewer eminent sculptors have left lasting monuments of their genius. The art in which the Athenians claim the most distinguished and exclusive superiority, is that which has the least frequently attained perfection.

Sculpture is said to have been known to the Greeks in the time of Theseus, one thousand three hundred years before Christ, when Dædalus completed many celebrated

works ; and his pupil Endæus executed a statue of Minerva, which Pausanias saw in the Acropolis. But the art was still rude, and the imitations were imperfect. It continued, however, to improve, till at length, in the four hundred and ninetieth year before Christ, Phidias appeared, along with many other great men, and finished more beautiful works than all the modern artists taken together have been able to produce. With Apelles, Praxiteles may be named, and a long list of inferior artists might be added. The two principal schools were Athens and Rhodes ; and so great was the disposition of the Greeks toward this art, that it did not entirely decline until literature had lost much of its splendour ; and the remains of former talent are discernible almost until the capture of Constantinople by the Turks.

From what precedes, the Greeks appear to have been the instructors of Europe, in all that relates to embellished imagination, and to have introduced into the works of fancy a solidity, a thought, and a perfection, which they had not before. But this lively and ingenious people left much to be done ; and it was reserved for a nation labouring under greater difficulties than were known in Attica, to give lessons upon the more important concerns of wisdom and reflection.

The cultivation of literature and of the arts underwent a different progress in Italy from that which it had experienced in other countries ; and the part which reason acted was unlike that which it would have played, had the Roman mind been left to develop itself according to the laws of natural circumstances.

Artificial difficulties had shut up the intellect of this people to the allurements of imagination, and had bound it down to the severer processes of reason. Until the most cogent wants were satisfied, they could not indulge in the pleasures of mind, and business had a prior claim to luxury. The march of imagination and reason was reversed ; and, while the one was checked, the other was matured in opposite proportions to those which they had been free to follow in Greece. It is in practical wisdom—in the *application of* sound judgment to the affairs of life, that

tual progress of the proud Romans became apparent, and their first occupation was political philosophy.

The founder of Rome, though the predecessor of Solon by almost two hundred and fifty years, was much his superior in political wisdom ; and Numa Pompilius deserves to be considered in the first rank among philosophers in the science of legislation. All the kings of Rome were more or less remarkable for their skill in jurisprudence ; and the laws were perfected before a single good poem had been written. The twelve tables also were compiled ; a work, says Cicero, superior to all that philosophers had ever conceived upon the subject ; and schools were instituted, in order to promote their study. During several centuries the principal characteristic of the Romans, next to military prowess, was reason ; and their principal occupations were government and jurisprudence. The list of men who made themselves celebrated in both, and who affixed their names to the laws which they proposed and carried into effect, would be endless.

As reason preceded imagination in Rome, so was philosophy prior to poetry. Still further—philosophy was practical before it was theoretical, as it always must be when it arises out of necessity ; and the Romans were a nation of instinctive sages before they had heard the word wisdom pronounced. It may appear paradoxical to say that this was one of the reasons why the professors Carneades, Diogenes, and Critolaus, who first made them acquainted with the Grecian doctrines, were dismissed by an order of the senate ; but where men have long been in the habit of practising successfully, they do not stop to theorise. Although government opposed the innovation, many partisans finally went over to Grecian philosophy ; and the most distinguished Romans in time became its disciples. Scipio, the victor of Carthage, whose constant companions were the historian Polybius, and the stoic Panætius ; C. Lælius, L. Furius, were among its most zealous admirers. But the man to whom it was the most indebted, was the conqueror of Mithridates, who, during his many successful campaigns

in Asia and in Macedonia, had opportunities of conversing with the most renowned philosophers. Lucullus, upon his return to Rome, disgusted at the coldness with which he was received, retired from public life, and gave himself up to study. He possessed a magnificent library, which he opened to the curious and the learned, and which contained the works of all poets and historians then known, together with the doctrines of all the philosophic sects. Another valuable present, too, was the works of Aristotle, introduced into Rome by Sylla. Thus the Romans had opportunities of comparing and selecting from the different sources which the speculative imagination of the Greeks had opened ; and every school had its votaries in the capital of the world.

The theoretic philosophy of the Romans was entirely borrowed from the Greeks ; and it is a remarkable fact, that hardly any original speculation was added in the country of its adoption. The genius to invent new dogmas, however, was not wanting, for depth of thought was common. But constant occupation prevented speculative enquiries ; and Rome enjoyed the benefits of wisdom, without discussing its principles. Every man acted according to philosophy, though none professed to do so. In Greece, learning and science had many teachers, but there was no philosophy among the people, and speculation was preferred to practice. There the term philosopher was used to denote a man who professionally taught philosophy ; and of such, in Rome, there were but few. There philosopher implied a man who practised philosophy—who studied it as he did any liberal art, and any branch of knowledge which might fit him to become a useful member of society. But he was not, on that account, set apart from the world ; he continued to occupy himself with public business—with the civil and military interests of his country, like other men, and without publishing his opinions. Though the Greeks may boast of Zeno, Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates, yet they cannot be called a philosophic nation. The Romans had fewer teachers, but more learners and more adepts ; for meditation made every man wise, and necessity compelled every man to meditate.

Another distinction between Greek and Roman philosophy was the deeper sagacity, and the wider reach of the latter. The human race had acquired the experience of several ages, and a difference is perceptible, not only between the philosophy of the two nations, but even between the philosophers of successive ages in the latter nation. They who lived in a more advanced period could compare a greater number of ideas, and strike out nobler truths from their collision. In the character of the Romans, philosophy, in a great measure, supplied the place which religion holds in every Christian people, and was the principal rule of their morality. For this reason it deserves attention, as it may help to throw much light, as well upon the morals as upon the intellect of this extraordinary people.

Although all the tenets of Greece had been scanned in Rome, two of them became particularly prevalent as soon as the nation had time to be contemplative. These were, Stoicism and Epicureanism, the two most opposite doctrines which had yet been imagined, and which one could hardly suppose would be adopted by the same nation; but the Romans were two different people at two different epochas, and while the change was taking place, nay both before and after it was accomplished, the body of the nation was composed of the most opposite characters and dispositions. Men are not uniform in any country, except where despotism smothers thought; but they are particularly various wherever the contrast of natural circumstances with established rule, assists the impulse of liberty, to create a diversity of moral temperaments.

The philosophy of the Stoics was prevalent as long as the republic lasted, and was in perfect unison with such a form of government. These men maintained the existence of a Providence, eminently good and wise, and watchful for the advantage of its creatures. The summum bonum was virtue, and true wisdom consisted in that state of the soul in which all the passions were at rest: right and wrong were the only admissible grounds for preferring one thing to another. There could be no public without private virtue, for the same qualities which are advantageous and just for

one man, must be advantageous and just for the multitude. The only real ills were moral imperfections—whatever did not depend upon ourselves could not be considered as a real good or a real evil. Such things might, indeed, give pleasure or pain, but the wise man held them to be indifferent. Other blessings again were independent of fortune—these every man might procure for himself, and no emotion could arise from them but satisfaction. They always attended the person who acted conformably to virtue, to the laws established by the author of Nature, and for the good of mankind.

The Epicureans ascribed the formation of the world to chance, and looked upon providence as a superfluous hypothesis. Their *summum bonum* consisted in the absence of ill, mental and corporeal. Good and evil, right and wrong, were mere names for pleasure and pain; each person was to govern himself as he pleased, and all good was to be estimated by the rule of self-advantage—anything more enlarged than this was an imposture and a folly. Notwithstanding this licentiousness, however, the Epicureans admitted the existence of gods, but did not allow that their exalted natures could take an interest in human affairs. The value of virtue, they said, should be measured by the pleasure it gave, and this might be enjoyed in the midst of bodily pain. Yet they represented virtue as a more prudent choice, because it could bring pleasure, but did not found the practice of good either upon conscience or upon elevation of mind.

The aptness of these opinions to the different conditions in which Rome existed may easily be conceived. As long as she was proud, wise, free, and virtuous, her national philosophy was Stoicism; but when she became vain, idle, enslaved, and vicious, she gave herself up to Epicureanism, and the revolution which she experienced in her philosophical opinions kept accurate pace with the political change which she was undergoing. The practice of these republicans was Stoicism, before they had heard of its founder, and they may be said to have invented and followed his theories even before Zeno lived, although they had not embodied them



into a prescriptive code ; but the first class of men who openly espoused them under their specific appellation were the jurisconsults, who, accustomed to consider law and justice as the most important concerns of life, found here congenial sentiments. The most eminent expounders of civil rights, as Rutilius Rufus, Sextus Pompeius, Actius, Tubero, Mutius Scævola, avowedly embraced this philosophy, and were followed by many illustrious Romans. Some even who were the disciples of other sects mixed up with their tenets the practices of the Stoics. The most eminent of the rash conspirators against Cæsar, Brutus, who had studied at Athens under Theomnestus the Platonician, and Cratippus the Peripatetic, was attached to the old academy. All his actions were stoical, and in several treatises he had blended the principles of Plato with those of Zeno. Another celebrated Stoic was Cato, surnamed of Utica, great grandson of the man who opposed the introduction of philosophy into Rome. From his youth he had studied the principles of this sect—his life was in unison with them, and his death confirmed his adherence. But from this period the prevalence of the stoic philosophy began to decline, and the persons who professed it must be considered as exceptions to the general rule which governed the national mind. Their attachment to it, indeed, was greater than that of their predecessors had been, because it was a refuge and a consolation in affliction. In later times, Tacitus, the two Plinys, Dio of Prusa, Euphrates of Alexandria, Epictetus, and, lastly, Antoninus, with whom the school may be considered as terminating, were firm adherents to these doctrines. It is remarkable, that the only philosophy which, in passing from Greece to Rome, was augmented and improved was that of Zeno.

In the beginning, the doctrines of the Epicureans excited disgust, and were tolerated only by the few who were plunged in riot and voluptuousness ; but they were finally adopted by men who were not remarkable for their depravity. Two celebrated Epicureans were, Atticus, the friend of Cicero, and the poet Lucretius ; but the real misfortune was, that the whole nation, abandoning the philosophy by which the

republic had flourished, became Epicureans in practice, and gave themselves up to sensual pleasures, as the summum bonum. Many other sects found partisans in Rome, but as their influence upon the national mind was less important, they do not deserve minute investigation.

From the prevalence of philosophy over the other branches of literature, the general tendency to such occupations may be estimated. The nation whose poetry, whose eloquence, whose history, are the most replete with philosophic speculations, even though no sects or sages, no Socrates, no Seneca ever existed there, must be held as the most philosophical. Neither should this mode of judging be confined to mere speculative wisdom; it is the fairest criterion of the degree in which reason has been applied, as well to the common as to the superior concerns of life. The more philosophy has been introduced into the daily habits of men, the more is the appellation of practical philosophers their due.

A talent which the Romans possessed at a very early period, and which was carried by them to a high degree of eminence before they had conceived that any precepts could improve the art, was eloquence. Although sufficient specimens do not remain to show exactly the nature of their oratory during the monarchy, and in the commencement of the republic, yet the form of government, the necessities arising out of it, and the relations which the different bodies of the state bore to each other, made the art of persuasion an indispensable accomplishment. The empire of the laws, too, was absolute, and these cannot be administered without being expounded. All the harangues of the Roman speakers were not addressed to the people, nor were the people of so irritable and sensitive a temper as the Greeks; consequently, the means of persuasion must have been more rational and less imaginative; they must have consisted more in arguments than in impulses, and their principal appeal must have been to the understanding. The speeches recorded of the great personages of Rome, if not authentic, were composed according to the spirit of the times, and are characterised more by good sense and truth, than by fancy or splendour. They are more dignified than impassioned—the matter is



preferable to the manner, and they belonged to a proud and reasoning people. Before philosophy had been taught as a science, or had even been designated by any separate appellation, it influenced the eloquence of this people, and was a practical inmate before its name was known.

Although no Roman statesman could at any time be devoid of the talent necessary to address the people, yet it was not till five centuries after the building of the city that oratory was considered as an art. Carneades, one of the Greeks who introduced the love of philosophy, was also the first who taught that eloquence had its rules. The *Os Suaviloquens* of Cornelius Cethegus, the numerous harangues of Cato the elder, so much admired by Cicero, graced this epocha; the two Gracchi, who so ill employed their eloquence—Sulp. Galba, celebrated for his wars in Lusitania—Licinius Crassus, so early accomplished in this art—Marcus Antony, the ancestor of the triumvir, succeeded to these men, but their labours have been lost.

About U. C. 666, schools of rhetoric were established; eloquent men began to abound, and the tone of oratory became more elevated—liberty was not extinct, but sensitive minds perceived that it was threatened. The struggle between those who were busy in undermining it, and those who were engaged in its defence, was sufficient to give energy to their discourses; but reason still remained on the side of the republicans, and the greatest orator of his country was the man who delayed her destruction in despite of general depravity. Cicero was to Demosthenes what every successor in the fine arts is to his predecessor. He had more method, more precision, was more careful of his words, more solicitous about his expressions—more exact in the structure of his sentences—full, flowing, and pompous; he employed more pains to finish his orations, and to polish every part. Demosthenes was more impetuous, more vehement, more impassioned, and more daring; he carried away his auditory by force—Cicero by insinuating graces. The former had more genius—the latter more art and refinement. But every statesman in Rome was an orator: Pompey studied under L. Ottacilius Pilitus; Cæsar was

deemed to be almost the rival of Cicero; M. Antony was the pupil of Sextus Clodius, and had studied in Athens; Brutus was the friend of Cicero, and no contemptible speaker; Hortensius Ortelus was another intimate, and a rival of the same great orator. But the rod of despotism at length struck down Roman eloquence, and not a single political orator appeared after the gloomy Tiberius had begun to reign. The art was confined to the bar, where it did not long retain its purity, but became degraded with sophistry and quibbles. Many eloquent writers, indeed, lived after this period, as Seneca, Quintilian, Pliny; but the forum was deserted, and public oratory had no other scene of action or display. Upon the whole, the eloquence of the Romans was more ratiocinative, more philosophical, and less imaginative, than that of the Greeks, and belonged to a prouder, a later, and a wiser people.

The addiction of the Roman mind to reason, in preference to imagination, was the cause why the first historians of Rome were more respectable than the first poets, and why so many men continued to flourish in recording the transactions of the world, when other branches of literature had fallen into decay.

Among the attempts to commemorate the deeds of the republic, the eighteen books of the poet Ennius, written in heroic verse, deserve to be mentioned, though they cannot be ranked among the works of regular history: but the name of Cato the Censor, mentioned before as celebrated for his eloquence, stands high upon the early list; and it is difficult to suppose that the 'Origines' of such a man was not a work of merit. The labours of many historians of this period are known only by the references which later writers have made to them. Among them are the memoirs of the Dictator Sylla, which must have been voluminous, since the seventy-first book has been quoted by Priscian.

But the most distinguished historians lived at a later period, when philosophy had become speculative, and men had been habituated to ponder on the accumulated facts of preceding ages.

As subjects for history, no nation of antiquity can be

compared to the Romans. The strongest efforts of mind had conducted them from the narrowest confines to the most extensive empire, and from the most hazardous beginning to the most secure prosperity. Their progress was guided by the most profound combination, and all their actions were the result of reflection. No historical painter ever could have such a subject for his pencil as the companions of Romulus, become, by wisdom, the masters of the world. But the pencil which could do them justice was no ordinary one, and could be duly wielded but by the most skilful hand. A philosophic nation, painted by philosophy, must be the noblest production of history.

As soon as the fever of occupation, which the bustling scenes of Roman aggrandisement had excited, had begun to subside, meditative minds looked back to the past, and beheld it with astonishment. To examine the causes of what might well amaze them, was a mighty task, but Hortensius Ortelus, Pomponius Attica, Cicero, Terentius Varro, J. Cæsar, Sallust, Asinius Pollio, Augustus himself, all men engaged in other pursuits, undertook it. The loss of a very large portion of their writings has deprived posterity of the means of judging of them ; and Julius Cæsar now stands at the head of the most ancient historical authors of his country. He is clear, simple, and elegant : ‘ Summus auctorum divus Julius,’ said Tacitus. But in the philosophy of history he is far inferior to his panegyrist, though he always considers things as a statesman. Sallust was one of the ablest and most engaging writers in his language, and preferred by Quintilian to Thucydides and to Livy. He inquired even more than Cæsar into the origin and the consequences of events. The works of Augustus exist no more ; but the greatest of all the historical writers of this age, the first, indeed, who, from the extent of his undertakings, would at this day deserve the epithet of *historian*, is Titus Livius. His labours comprised, ~~more than~~ a half, and were contained in books, the greatest number sources were the ancient predecessors ; he excels

sonages, and in making them act accordingly. The speeches which he makes them utter are models of eloquence and logic, and each appears unanswerable until the reply is pronounced; his narration is lively and varied, and his veracity unquestioned, notwithstanding his enthusiasm in favor of his country. It is absurd to lay to his charge the superstitions which he records, and which belong to the age that he paints. He will always be considered as one of the greatest historians known. To him succeeded Velleius Paterculus, an imitator of Sallust, and a flatterer of Augustus, Livia, Tiberius, and Sejanus; Valerius Maximus, still more disgusting by his abject praises of bad men; and history was declining under the reigns of corrupt princes, until a man appeared endowed with a nobler mind, fully awake to the vices of his countrymen, and bold enough to express his indignation—this man was Tacitus.

Caius Cornelius Tacitus, one of the most illustrious ornaments of Roman literature, has never been surpassed in most of the requisites which form the real historian: his soul was filled with all that ancient Rome had produced of magnificent and bold—with patriotism and the love of solid glory—with the civic virtues which had made her unconquerable—with the indignation which her present vices deserved. His mind could penetrate into the most hidden recesses of the heart, and his judgment could distinguish what was true and what was false, in all its emotions: his imagination, brilliant as a poet's ought to be, was tempered by all the reason which history requires; but what raises him still higher is, the extent and the profoundness of his views. No historian had been philosophical as he was, and language often seems too poor to utter his conceptions. No author excites his reader so much to reflection, or awakens such a crowd of corresponding thoughts. In every line may be found the philanthropist, who lives in slavery regretting freedom, and sarcastic only when he contrasts the general degradation with the noble recollections on which his heart delights to dwell. After him came many others—Q. Curtius, Suetonius, Florus, Justin, &c., who, had he not existed, might be considered as possessed of merit; but

Tacitus was the epitome of all that is great among the Roman writers of history. From this period history declined, because there was not any thing worthy of being recorded, and the public was excluded from all participation in the state.

If the Romans had acquired little or no superiority over the Greeks in abstract philosophy, it cannot be denied that, in its application to history, they had great disadvantages. Roman historians, previous to the reign of Augustus, present a mass of merit which would in vain be sought for in Greece before the Persian war; and Cæsar, Sallust, Livy, may be compared, without prejudice, to Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon; but if to this Tacitus be added, it must be confessed that the Romans were infinitely superior, and that the nation in which reason, political philosophy, good government, jurisprudence had made the greatest progress, was also that in which the science of history was the most completely understood.

The poetry of both countries followed the same law as their respective reason and imagination. The poetical tendency of Rome was not strong enough, in remote times, to produce, or at least to preserve any remarkable works, much less a poem which could bear a comparison with the *Iliad*. Yet this martial city was not without its early poetry. The songs of the Arvales, of the Salian priests, the Fescennine, and Saturnine verses, the Atellane Fables, are proofs of the contrary even while they shew the extreme bad taste and ignorance of the nation; but all these productions are so inferior to the writings of the Greeks, in analogous degrees of social improvement, that, in order not to attribute a great inferiority to the Romans, it is necessary to remember their eminence in the more valuable walks of intellect.

As the entire development of character was anomalous in Rome, so was the progress of poetry. A nation which is original will, in selecting subjects of poetry, follow the direct dictates of Nature—a nation which imitates, free to choose where it pleases, copies the model which suits its own particular fancy. Thus, in Greece, the lyre, not reckoning from Orpheus, but merely from Tyrtæus, (684 B.C.) was strung

two hundred years before. Æschylus (486 B. C.) had spoken from the stage ; while in Rome, where the order of Nature was so generally reversed, the more complicated art of the drama preceded, exactly by the same space of time, the simpler strains of lyric poetry.

Dramatic literature began with Livius Andronicus, who translated nineteen plays from the Greek—so removed were the Romans from having any original impulse towards theatrical compositions. His poetry was rude and harsh ; the tragedies of his more polished successor, Ennius, were also translations from the same language, as were those of his nephew Pacuvius, whom Quintilian praises for the force of his language and the truth of his characters. Lucius Accius is supposed to be the first who produced an original piece—the subject was Brutus : but none of these could be compared to the Greek tragedians, neither could it be supposed that a nation which had begun with the most difficult branch of poetry, could all at once attain the excellence of men who had served a regular apprenticeship to the art, and had passed through all the previous steps which are indispensable to success.

The early comedy of the Romans was distinguished by more talent than their tragedy. Comedy, since the days of Aristophanes, had been much modified. It had passed through its three degrees, and had become what is termed the new comedy, in which persons, situations, sentiments, and characters were, as now, fictitious, and of which Menander was considered as the prince. Plautus and Terence were the great comic poets of Rome, but their ample borrowings from the Greeks leave them small claim to originality. So little, indeed, did the manners of the Romans afford proper subjects for this species of dramatic composition, that both Plautus and Terence dared not introduce them upon the stage, but confined themselves entirely to Grecian habits and characters.

It is a mistake to suppose that comedy demands a greater knowledge of human nature than tragedy. Comedy is a representation of manners, more than of passions, and paints the ridiculous, not the serious features of the soul. Tragedy

represents the storms which sweep through the heart, and to which man, in every condition of society, is subject. It was because the refinements which give light and shade to the ludicrous had not yet become familiar, that comedy was deficient among the ancients—for the Greeks had only buffoonery, and the Romans only imitations. In the regular order of Nature, attempts at tragedy always must precede the conceptions of comedy; not because the latter require more philosophy, but because they depend upon a more advanced and general progress of society, and on the polish which, contrasted with the humours of the less refined, make them proper subjects for ridicule.

Comedy fell into disuse in Rome long before tragedy began to decline. The last of the good comic writers now extant was Terence; but the latter art was cultivated by many eminent men, as Cæsar, Asinius Pollio, L. Varius, Ovid, Augustus, Mæcenas, and, finally, Seneca. It is remarkable how little the practical philosophy of the Romans assisted them in the dramatic art. The epopœa was cultivated about the time in which tragedy began to be known, and the same names, L. Andronicus, Nævius, and Ennius appear in both; but epic poetry found so worthy a rival of Greece in Virgil, that he alone may be taken as the type of Roman excellence in this branch of literature.

Never was the difference between originality and imitation, between the poetry of rudeness and of refinement, so strongly marked as in the Grecian and the Augustan bards. In the former everything is magnificent; in the latter every thing is polished. But the characters of Virgil have few distinguishing features, and those not always well supported. Æneas is brave, pious, yet uninteresting. Virgil, however, is superior to Homer in tenderness, because the Roman matron was a being more dignified than any Grecian woman could be—and much of female dignity consists in softness. Many of his scenes, where men alone are concerned, are pathetic; but his battles have neither the conflict nor the terror of Homer's. His invention is inferior, as also his vivacity; but his correctness, his even stateliness, are much superior. In all the direct perceptions of immediate nature,



Homer excels; but the philosophy of the latter—that of Plato, the most poetical of all the poetic philosophers of Greece—gave him an advantage which the father of the epopœa could not know.

Many other walks of poetry were cultivated in Rome, and Virgil himself was celebrated in more than one. His *Georgics* may be considered as the most polished example of didactic poetry extant. Another extraordinary, but much less finished poem of the same class, is that of *Lucretius*. Didactic poetry is unquestionably that in which the Romans surpassed their predecessors, because it depends at least as much upon knowledge and acquirements, as upon imagination, and the world was wiser in the time of Augustus than of Homer, or even of Pericles.

A comparison of the odes of Anacreon and Pindar with the lyric poetry of Horace, sufficiently shows the progress which the world had made during the interval, in the concerns of reason. The lyre of Greece was tuned by the liveliest sensibility and the warmest imagination, and inspired by Nature herself. But it was reserved for Horace to make it resound with the accents of good sense and of philosophy; and to teach its chords to vibrate in unison with the hearts of feeling men, whom experience has detached from the illusions of a vain and empty world.

Satire is a branch of poetry peculiarly characteristic of the Roman mind. The first satirical poets were Ennius, Pacuvius, and, lastly, Lucilius. But as the corruption of Rome increased, indignation became greater; and, when the balance was completely overthrown, the few who remained honest set no bounds to their expression of anger. Lucilius attacked the perversity of his contemporaries with republican freedom and severity. Horace, who lived under a prince that called himself the restorer of morals, was inclined to virtue; but he dared not utter his complaints. He was unwilling to rail at the vices of his times, but he did not spare what was ridiculous; and he lashed with urbanity the ludicrous pretensions of every class: he was the courtly satirist of an Epicurean monarchy. Very different from the time of Augustus were the reigns of Nero



and Domitian ; and equally different from Horace were Persius and Juvenal. The youthful and inexperienced energy of the former, the severe probity of the latter, could not have suited the polished court of the first emperor. The most favorable state of things for satirical poetry is general depravity, surrounding a few virtuous and indignant men. But Juvenal adds to this the temerity which despair bestows ; and hopeless of pardon for a small as for a great offence, he throws away his scabbard, and plunges his sword at once into the very heart of vice.

In the exact sciences, in natural history, in medicine, the Romans were far from keeping pace with the Greeks. The accuracy of these occupations, however, might well have suited their rational minds ; but it seemed as if their whole reason was reserved for the philosophy of which they stood the most in need. Until the year 262, B.C. they knew no division of the day but the rising and setting of the sun, and the middle of his career ; and a slave was employed in every house to run to the forum to consult a sun-dial constructed for a longitude which differed from that of Rome by 40' 30''. It was only in the next century, about the year when the rhetoricians were banished, that the first accurate gnomon was erected. Astromomy did not, at any time, make much progress. In the natural sciences the names of Lucretius, Seneca, Pliny, stand prominent ; but, upon the whole, their labours added little to the general stock of knowledge.

In the fine arts, as painting and sculpture, this people were not productive. After the destruction of Corinth and the devastation of Athens, they affected a taste for the works of art, and the city became filled with statues and paintings. Yet the best specimens of sculpture were executed by Grecian artists. Painting was at one time held to be effeminate and disgraceful ; and was not prized as it ought to be even when Grecian refinements became common. The great study of the Romans, as long as they studied anything, was the intellect, and the moral, not the physical world.

If the human race is indebted to the Greeks for the

earliest works of imagination which have embellished society, the Romans deserve still deeper gratitude for the more valuable presents which they have made in the works of reason and reflection. The advances they made in policy, in legislation, in jurisprudence, were surely worth more than all the pictures and statues of Greece ; and the practical philosophy of Rome was preferable to all the speculations of Athens. To these two nations may be traced the enjoyments of imagination, and the blessings of reason, which Europe now possesses ; and each, in its respective line, may be considered as the parent stock of all the present improvement diffused over this most advanced and cultivated quarter of the globe.

After the decay of Roman power, a dreadful chasm ensued. Eloquence had been declining ever since liberty had begun to diminish. Poetry survived awhile ; but after being a cherished inmate in the court of the first emperor, it was gradually silenced. History and satire derived much force from the vices of the multitude, and the virtues of a few ; but soon the few ceased to be virtuous. Philosophy was no longer general and practical. Even the arts, the companions of luxury, were neglected. But these times of decay were happy, when compared with the season of devastation which followed.

Out of this chaos, and after the lapse of many centuries, a second separation of light from darkness ensued ; and intellect rose again upon the world, to console it for long ages of ignorance, by an increase of knowledge which, in the first era of civilisation, could not be foreseen. The examination of the second period will still more satisfactorily demonstrate that the progress of mind has always been earlier, but always imaginative, in the regions most highly favored by nature ; and always later, but always rational, in the countries which had to struggle against greater yet superable difficulties.

On the revival of learning, the picture which the most imaginative country of ancient Europe presented, was truly melancholy ; and most feelingly showed the lamentable instability of greatness. The nation from which the first dawnings of social improvement had once spread over this

continent, was no more. Her poetry, her philosophy, and her arts, were scattered over the world; and her descendants, speaking her language, maintained the former glories of Greece in other lands. To these, men rallied in the ages of barbarism; and from them the models were taken which fired the genius and improved the taste of modern society. No seven cities contended now, as formerly, for a reviving Homer. Athens had no Socrates, and dull Bœotia no Pindar. No new examples sprung up in the classic cradle of refined intellect, to give a second impulse to mankind. All that Greece was destined to contribute she had given, at a period when the world was smaller. But, as the north had become inhabited; as millions existed where scarcely hundreds were seen before; and as difficulties, once unknown, opposed the footsteps of increasing generations, other faculties were called into action. Imagination could not supply the demands which the new situation of mankind had created; and the natural circumstances of Greece were too unlike the difficulties under which the rest of Europe laboured, to stimulate the mind in a direction suitable to its present exigencies.

It was to Rome and to Roman recollections, that rising civilisation looked for assistance; and to the capital of the Christian empire, Christians naturally turned for the lessons of social improvement.

So solid had been the foundations of greatness there, so vast its influence, so long its duration, that no common accident could subvert its ascendancy. Two circumstances particularly favoured this ascendancy: the diffusion of Roman jurisprudence over the world; the pre-eminence which the new and true religion gave to the capital of the Cæsars. The former had its foundation in the wisdom of the old republic, and of some chiefs of the empire; the latter in the ambition which became hereditary, in all the stages of prosperity, of decline, and of regeneration, through which the city of Romulus was destined to pass. Both Greece and Rome, long after they had lost their splendour, exercised their authority upon the noblest part of man, as they did when they were in the zenith of their power and genius.

But the philosophy and the policy of the former were sooner neglected than her poetry and her eloquence; while the works of Roman reason lasted, and were the first of which returning civilisation claimed the assistance.

It was on this account that a more northern nation had the start of Italy in the enchanting province of poetry; and that the Troubadours and Trouveurs of France preceded the rhymers of the peninsula. For this reason, too, the poetry of Italy, when once it was tuned, was more grand and elevated than all the strains which had issued from the capital of Languedoc.

An entire dissimilarity in the manners of the ancients and of the moderns produced proportionate difference in their poetry and general literature. In the heroic ages of Greece, all was great, gigantic, and rude. Remarkable men were demigods; and but a little distance separated heroes and divinities. From these opinions Homer, and all his Greek and Latin successors, borrowed an imagery which modern bards could not adopt. The Troubadours had other sources of fiction, and their fancies were busied upon more diminutive subjects. Their men were men, and their heroes never could be supernatural beings. Nevertheless they sang magnificent themes: the events of the crusades; the battles of Europe and Asia, in the plains of Palestine; the simplicity of the cross opposed by the splendour of the East; and scenes embellished by Asiatic imagery. But these did not long continue the sole subjects of the muse; they were succeeded by many others, and the first complete poem which can bear a comparison with the works of antiquity appeared. The earliest poet of modern civilisation, who deserves to take his station beside the immortal bards of Greece and Rome, was the Florentine, Dante—a man endowed with one of the most extraordinary minds that has been known; capable of reaching the sublimest flights, yet often descending to the poorest absurdities; with a richness of imagination which seems to have no bounds, and an occasional tenderness that has rarely been surpassed. Dante was not only the father of modern Italian poetry, but the restorer of letters to modern Europe.

To him succeeded many celebrated men, as Petrarch, renowned for his sonnets, and his love which occasioned them ; and, at an interval of three centuries, the two accomplished poets, the chief supporters of modern Italian glory, Ariosto and Tasso. The former was a man of the most varied resources of mind, and of the most copious fancy, excelling alternately in every walk, whether serious, comic, heroic, or descriptive ; and wantonly indulging the exuberances of an extravagant imagination. Tasso was more correct and chaste ; his imagination was more under his control, and he knew how to temper its ardour by all the resources of art. His Jerusalem, constructed after the Grecian models, yet mixed with the stories of his age, may be considered as the most classical poem of chivalry : while the Orlando of Ariosto is like a Gothic structure, wild, irregular, and magnificent, in which some parts offend, but which is not the less a varied, grand, and venerable pile ; and more attractive, perhaps, than the regular but colder imitations of Greek or Roman stateliness.

Tasso was, perhaps, the poet of modern Italy who had the deepest knowledge of the human heart, and who excelled in painting the characters of men. Had he turned his thoughts to the drama, this qualification would have entitled him to success. But the taste for dramatic representation, unless accompanied by music, never was predominant in Italy ; and the single merit of any one of the poets just named far exceeds that of all other authors, comic or tragic, who have appeared there. Maffei, Alfieri, Goldoni, are spiritless, when compared with Dante, Ariosto, and Tasso ; and could not be put in competition with the dramatic authors of other countries. Metastasio wrote his plays expressly for musical accompaniment ; and sacrificed the legitimate walk of tragedy for the unnatural mixture of recitative and song. But the modern Italians, more sensitive than rational, are more alive to the charms of melody, than moved by the accents of true passion. Until the sixteenth century, when Trissino, Rucellai, and others, began to cultivate the tragic muse, and Ariosto, Machiavelli, Aretino, produced some lively comedies, the drama had

been neglected ; neither has it even yet risen to the respectability which it has attained in Spain, France, Germany, or England, and which the *epopœa* has reached in Italy. The most remarkable productions in the dramatic form are pastorals ; the *Pastor Fido* of Guarini, and still more, the *Amyntas* of Tasso, which had many imitators, the greatest part of whom however disgraced their song by extravagances and conceits.

The lyric poetry of Italy owed its first and greatest splendour to Petrarch ; but after his death it declined, and was neglected during two centuries, when it revived again, more through a spirit of imitation than of originality, and many female poets strung their lyre. But it never rose to high inspiration, even in the hands of Tasso ; and it declined, although the crowd of candidates was excessive, during the sixteenth century.

Every other species of poetry was cultivated in Italy at different periods ; but none appear to have reached the same perfection as the heroic, and the three great poetic names of that country still remain, Dante, Ariosto, and Tasso.

In the alternations of despotism and anarchy which have weighed upon Italy, political eloquence cannot be supposed to have flourished ; and it would be difficult to quote examples of public oratory.

The same thing may be said of philosophy. Although some men of rare and extraordinary talents, as Cardan, for instance, appeared, yet the science made no progress, and the nation was not philosophical. In this the Italians of the sixteenth century most materially differed from those who had preceded them by two thousand years, because the days of difficulty were no more. An exception, however, must be made to this assertion in favor of political philosophy. Toward the end of the fifteenth century, a very profound writer revived a science which the Romans had practised, but the theory of which had been neglected almost since the time of Aristotle. Machiavelli may be considered as the first modern who reduced the art of

governing empires to settled principles, and examined the philosophy of political relations.

The theme which he selected was particularly interesting to him, as it belonged to the ancient glories of his country. The Roman historians had given occupation to the ingenious ever since the revival of letters. Some of the learned had restored the text; others had pointed out its beauties; others had rectified chronological errors; but the superior mind of the Florentine secretary saw greater things than these, and deduced, from the profound authors of antiquity, the lessons of political philosophy. The sad picture of modern Italy, divided into small republics, which contended among each other by force and by intrigues, while revolution succeeded to revolution, inspired his genius. From comparing these with Rome, in her rise and in her fall, he learned the causes of every vicissitude, and saw, with regret, that they could never act again. Despondency and bitterness pervade the best works of this great man; but whatever they contain to dishonor the author must not be set down to him, but to his age and country. Machiavelli wanted only to have lived in a larger and a less profligate theatre to have been exempt from all the faults with which he has been charged.

But Florence was not the only state that had its political philosopher; and the republic of Venice was the subject which Giannotti chose for his speculations, and Contarini for his unqualified praises. Genoa also had her Foglieta; and last came Botero, who, acquainted with more comprehensive political relations than Machiavelli, extended to Europe the views which his predecessors had limited to Italy. His genius, however, was not as enlarged as his opportunities of observation.

The attention which had been paid to political philosophy was favorable to a species of literature in which no people was so successful, in the first ages of reviving civilisation, as the Italians—history. At the very time, too, when Dante and Petrarch had created the language of poetry, Boccaccio had almost perfected the style of prose; and



Machiavelli had since given it new precision. Thus, then, they possessed every requisite which could contribute to make them valuable narrators.

It may be questioned, however, whether the condition of Italy, at this moment, was the most favorable to historical literature. Depravity was extreme in public as in private affairs; and no feeling of liberty remained even among the republics. With the exception of Venice and Genoa, princes had usurped the power of the people; courts had succeeded to popular magistrates; ministers to senates; and royal pomp to democratic simplicity. The capital of the Christian world had become the seat of corruption; and the heads of the church had often been the most vicious of its votaries. Tuscany, at all times the asylum of talent and genius, had fallen under the rule of a powerful family, and sacrificed her liberties to the splendour of the Medici. Lombardy was a field of battle, where foreign rivals fought for the honor of bestowing ruin on a people, whom misery had made indifferent even to the choice of a master. These scenes were passing on the very spot where the greatest empire had grown from the smallest beginnings, and had performed exploits which had been narrated by the most accomplished historians. Such calamities would have been enough to damp the recording spirit, had not the recollections of ancient Rome inspired it; and history was placed between the alternative of being totally neglected, or else of acquiring extraordinary superiority. The misfortunes which, to any other people, would have been an insurmountable obstacle, became the themes which filled the Italian legends; and their excellence was derived from melancholy reflections on the present and the past.

Italian historians must not be judged of by such a sample as Paolo Giorio, who considers it as a privilege of history to magnify or to diminish the vices and the virtues of men, as may be necessary to make a better tale. Guicciardini was actuated by a very different principle in the work which he has left upon the events of his own times, and which was ably continued by Adriani. Historians who represented facts as they really occurred, found it prudent to conceal



their writings during the lives of the actors ; and Nerli, Legni, Varchi, left their works to be published by their heirs. Varchi was the only historian of these times who had not been personally engaged in the events which they recorded ; and all were moreover celebrated in other walks of literature, and even in poetry.

The most meritorious of Italian historians were the accomplished Florentines ; as well on account of their number, their sagacity, their impartiality, as the eloquence and purity of their diction. The historians of Venice had a deeper knowledge of public affairs, and experience had given them wider views. The external relations of the maritime republics were more extensive, and her negotiations and her interests more complicated. But, though the Italian historians of this epocha were superior to any in Europe, they did not long remain so ; for, in the countries where governments have been improving, history has been cultivated with an ardour and a success proportioned to the importance of the transactions which it was destined to recount.

The progress of the physical and the mathematical sciences was considerable in early times ; and universities were soon established to disseminate knowledge. Bologna, Ferrara, Milan, Padua, Pavia, Piacenza, vied with each other in various branches of philosophy. In botany, Casalpini left a lasting reputation ; in anatomy, Fallopius, Eustachius, Tagliacozzi ; in mathematics, physics, &c., Barozzi, the predecessor of Galileo in the persecutions of the Inquisition ; Tartaglia, Maurolico, Cardan, Ferrari, Della Torre, Magini, Danti, Porta, Sarpi, Galileo, Torricelli ; and many more modern names, as Spalanzani, Fontana, Volta, Galvani, Piazzzi, show that these departments of knowledge have been constantly cultivated.

But the obligations which Italy has conferred on modern Europe in the fine arts are supereminent. Sculpture and painting were soon introduced, and long flourished there exclusively. Sicily, once the granary of Rome, was also the receptacle where many of the arts had lain concealed in the dark ages, and from there they returned again to the

continent. The Greek models, which had lain buried for many ages, and which were dug up in the fifteenth century, the works of Phidias and Praxiteles, were the greatest excitements which inexperienced artists could know. Accordingly, in the eleventh century, many names became celebrated; as the two Pisanos, Cimabue, Giotto, Ghiberti, Donatello, Brunaleschi, and, last of all, Michael Angelo Buonarotti. The present age, too, has produced the greatest of all modern sculptors, the only one, indeed, who has appeared for two thousand years that could be compared with the exquisite masters of antiquity.

About the same time as sculpture, painting also made its appearance, and the same persons acquired fame in both arts. The latter was in a miserable state in the hands of the descendants of Apelles and Timanthes, when Cimabue resolved to rescue it from decay, and the first picture he produced was a sufficient omen of success. Numberless artists succeeded him, and continued to tread in the same steps. At length academies were founded, and the following men appeared;—Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Raphael, San-Giovanni, Titian, Correggio, &c., with nearly two hundred others, a list which, for merit and numbers, could not be equalled in the universe. The taste and genius, the conception, design, composition, and colouring of the Italian painters excel whatever is known in the world; and no nation has ever produced rivals who can be put in competition with them for general effect and nature.

In reviewing the intellectual propensities of this peninsula, it is impossible not to be struck with the superiority which Etruria has constantly maintained in almost every province of mind, and that from the earliest ages. The Etruscans were among the most ancient inhabitants of Italy, and were formed into a regular society long before the Romans had settled there. It was from them that the latter learned how to build temples; to carve the images of their gods; to erect cities, and to construct fortifications. From them they borrowed the ensigns of royalty; the division of society into aristocracy and people; military instruments, and trophies; agriculture; the plantation of

vines ; medicine, music, poetry, navigation, philosophy. Not an art or a science was known in which the inhabitants of Tuscany did not excel, and which they did not communicate to their neighbours.

The modern duchy of this name preserves the same superiority ; and no portion of the known world, perhaps, of similar extent and population, has produced so large a proportion of remarkable persons, or so generously contributed to the embellishments and enjoyments of mind. Of the men who have been here named, by much the better half were Florentines. Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio (born, indeed, in Paris during a visit which his parents made there, but taken to Florence while a child), Machiavelli, Giannotti, Guiccardini, with many other political writers, attest this fact. In the fine arts, also, Florence had the advantage of all other states ; and one-fourth of the celebrated painters of Italy belongs to this little republic. Although, in small societies, the laws of nature are more easily disturbed by accidents—by individual humours and dispositions, than in large masses of mankind, yet this persistency of Etruria in the same cast of thought, during twenty-five centuries, cannot be attributed to casual influences. Fixed and settled causes have most assuredly existed during all that time, even though we may not be able to discern them with the accuracy which they merit.

Tuscany is more rich and luxuriant than even Italy generally is. Its natural circumstances allow every kind of repose and indulgence. The sirocco, the malaria seldom visit it ; and a long extent of coast brings refreshing temperature from the large tract of sea which divides it from Africa. Upon the whole, the natural situation of Tuscany is such as to allow great activity of mind, without stimulating it to indispensable and fatiguing exertions ; and, as an intellectual country, it gives it great advantages. Particular circumstances, too,—a beautiful and romantic scenery, canopied by a clear unclouded sky ;—varieties of light and shade ;—a warm and glowing atmosphere, were favorable to painting. Opportunities of procuring marble superior even to Parian, to Pentelic, and to Hymetian marble, at Luni and at Car-

rara, gave the materials for sculpture. The territory, large enough for independence in Italy, yet sufficiently small to exclude ambition, turned its views to intellectual, more than to political pursuits; and, though it was not always governed to the best advantage, talent and genius found such powerful protectors there in nature, that they continued to flourish notwithstanding moral difficulties.

The career which seems to have been allotted to Italy in the second era of European civilisation, was different from that which ancient Rome had run. Modern Italy was left in the entire enjoyment of all her natural advantages, and could give full indulgence to imagination, without the check of reason. The fine arts were as much her own in the second period, as in the first they were the property of Greece. But philosophy, with whatever depends upon experience and induction, was not so much cultivated as in the Roman republic. One single branch formed an exception,—political philosophy, with its dependent history, because the division of Italy into small free states encouraged international speculations. But the Italians cannot be compared to the Greeks, the inventors, as far as we know, of everything which adorns the mind, and embellishes life; while the former were merely the revivers of the arts. Neither, in the political sciences, were they equal to their Roman ancestors; and it will soon appear that, in all the walks of reason, they were inferior to the northern nations, whose improvement was of a later date.

The Arabians had considerable influence upon the literature of every country in Europe; but that in which it was the most directly felt was Spain. Notwithstanding perpetual wars and enmity during five centuries, an involuntary and indispensable intercourse had mixed the two nations, and the ardent minds of the Africans became easily blended with the glowing imaginations of the Spaniards. While the Provençal troubadours gave the first impulse to the muse of Italy, Spanish poetry was under the influence of Moorish habits; and the entire genius of the nation was undergoing great modifications, as well from the contests which they maintained against their invaders, as from the

amicable relations in which both parties occasionally lived together. The earliest poetry of Spain appears to have been romances and ballads, most probably recording the exploits of the heroes of Asturias. The Spaniards, at the revival of literature, knew not the models of antiquity ; and the events which interested them the most were their own wars. A chronicle, in verse, on the actions of Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar, surnamed the Cid, and which is supposed to be the most ancient poem of modern Spain, confirms this opinion. It is replete with patriotic sentiments, and deserves to be considered as the earliest epopœa of chivalry. This composition preceded the time of Dante by two centuries at least ; but it is not of sufficient importance to dispute with him the merit of having restored the literature of Europe.

In the thirteenth century, two monarchs, Alphonso X. and XI., were protectors, if not practitioners of the art ; and the latter is said to have written a general chronicle in *redondillos*. The most distinguished poet of this time was Don Juan Manuel, of the royal family of Castile, who has left many works ; and in no nation was the attention of the great turned toward poetry at so early a period.

The premature tendency to epopœa, however, was not prolific at a later era, and Spanish poetry is deficient in this department. The Cid, indeed, was the subject of many poems which are better styled heroic than epic. Neither had the lyric yet flourished ; even though a prodigious number of romances, principally founded on the subjects of chivalrous novels, was known to every man. In no country, perhaps, were these poetic recitals of the exploits of favorite heroes more popular. Every Spaniard knew by heart the history, true or false, of Bernard di Carpio—of the Cid—of Cayferos, and of all the knights who flourished in the time of Amadis, down to the more modern wars carried on by Ordone and Ramirez, and the final conquests of Ferdinand and Isabella. Some of those are exquisitely beautiful, and abound in the most delicate sensibility ; others are full of the pomps and horrors of war.

But these productions were eclipsed by the poetical court of John II., and the superior merit of two men of rank,

and of better education than preceding authors had enjoyed, the Marquisses of Villena and of Santillane. The wish of the former was to inspire his countrymen with a taste for the poetry of the Troubadours. The study of the latter was to infuse the spirit of philosophy into the works of imagination; but neither of them rose much above the common forms of *canciones*, or launched his muse into the bolder walks of poetry. In a word, this century alone is said to have produced one hundred and thirty-six poets termed lyric; but whom it would be difficult to characterise under any one specific denomination.

Although *canciones* and romances abounded, yet the historians of Spanish literature usually call Herrera the founder of their lyric poetry. A great revolution had taken place in the state. The kingdoms of Spain had been united under Ferdinand and Isabella. The Moors had been expelled—the inquisition had been established—America had been discovered—the peninsula, delivered from intestine enemies, and aided by the treasures of the new world, was in a condition to turn her own strength, and the wealth of Mexico and Peru against the nations of Europe, from which she had so long been divided by more than the Pyrenees. The gran capitan, Gonsalvo Fernandez de Cordova, won the kingdom of Naples for his master, in 1504, and from that moment Italian examples began to influence. Under the successors of Ferdinand, the power of Austria was added to that of Spain, and the government became more and more despotic, while the people lost the generous liberty of thought which once dignified them. Their poetry became more classical, and ceased to possess its distinctive character of nationality.

The predecessors of Herrera in this new era were Boscan, Garcilasso de la Vega, and Diego de Mendoza. Their efforts were directed to introduce the Italian measure, and their principal compositions were songs and sonnets after the manner of Petrarch. The eclogues of Garcilasso are particularly beautiful, and, above all, the third, in which two shepherds lament the loss of their mistresses, the one faithless, the other dead. After them, two Portuguese poets, who wrote nevertheless in the Spanish language, appeared,



Ferdinand de Herrera, surnamed the Divine, the poet the most truly lyric of his country, and Louis Ponce de Leon, the last of the great writers of the age of Charles V. They were succeeded by some minor versifiers; but this species of composition soon declined, and did not recover its former majesty even in the hands of Espinel and other poets of the classic school. Some poor attempts at epopœa also distinguished the age of the monarch, whose wars and exploits seemed the only theme worthy of a Spanish Homer: but all the Caroleids—Carlos famoso, Carlos victorioso, Carolea—failed; and even El Pelayo, by Alonzo Lopez, had no better success.

The Spanish drama, even from its commencement, stood upon different grounds; and the first attempt was remarkable, as the long play of Calixto and Melibœa sufficiently announces, so early as the fifteenth century. But it was in the time of Charles that the theatre assumed its regular form; and two parties, the erudites and the moralists, contributed to its progress. Torres Naharro, Lopez de Rueda, Juan de la Cueva, Geronimo Bermudez, were the chief dramatists of this epocha, which, however, was far from being as brilliant as that which produced Cervantes, Lope de Vega, Calderone, the two Argensolas, Antonio de Solis, Moreto, Guillen de Castro, &c., and a list of eminent men who contributed to enrich the Spanish theatre, and to make it the most prolific of Europe.

The *comedia* of Spain, a name under which every species of dramatic composition is included, is most characteristic of the nation, because the public—that multifarious judge, which requires so many modes of variety—always had the leading influence in conducting it. In the Spanish theatre are to be found the following characteristics: 1st, Strict adherence to the truth of history, which reverses and arduous struggles had made sacred. 2nd, An almost ferocious susceptibility on the point of honor, particularly where women were engaged. 3rd, Intrigue more than fable, interest, character, or strong delineation of the heart. 4th, Graceful poetry, replete with ingenuity and imagery.

The history of Spanish poetry may be divided into three

epochas, corresponding to the great political eras of the country. The first includes the whole period which preceded the accession of the house of Austria. This was the season of its greatest energy and vigour, though of its least refinement. It was all chivalrous, and its graces were rude simplicity and noble frankness. The imagination which upheld it was uncontrolled, and unaided by art, and even ignorance extended its brilliant empire in the regions of the marvellous. It was checked by no laws, and awed by no superstition for classic authorities; but while its sentiments were those which every Spaniard felt and cherished in his heart—its ornaments were oriental. When Charles V. ascended the throne, chivalry existed but in recollections. Its poetry was fabulous, and soon declined. The genius of the nation, however, discovered other domains—lyric poetry and the drama. Here again the same grandeur and freedom are to be found as formerly; and the rules which prescribe limits to invention were unknown or neglected. The period of the Austrian dynasty was that in which the Spanish theatre flourished at home, and was admired by Europe; and the unsophisticated strength of the first era was succeeded by the ingenious beauties of a more advanced age. The third and last epocha, the reign of the Bourbons, was that in which every great poetic feeling was smothered by the rules of what, in the language of French criticism, is called good taste, the first principle of which is, that art is preferable to nature. Thus the poetic fire of Spain was extinguished; her ancient poets became the butts of fastidiousness, and all her genius shrivelled into pettiness. Neither has it yet ventured to expand again, although the house of Bourbon naturalised itself in its new country; and the efforts of La Heurta, Yriarte, and Valdez have not been able to restore the Spanish muse to her ancient vigour.

No country of Europe, ancient or modern, with the exception of Greece perhaps, has more completely followed the laws of nature, in adjusting its poetry to its character, than Spain; but nature was different in both nations, and so, too, was the progress of imagination. In Greece, the development of thought was undisturbed by accidents, and



every province of poetic diction was cultivated in its proper time and place. The single passions of individuals first tuned the lyre, and when the exploits of gods and heroes had been sung, the feelings of men were embodied in the drama; but in Spain the bounty of nature was thwarted by the invaders who came to share it, and the wars which followed kept up a constrained activity and vigilance. The exploits of single warriors may awaken lyric poetry, but the epopœa sings collective glory. In the arduous task of expelling foreign oppressors, no Spanish poet found a theme for his epic muse, unsullied by the recollection of former defeat. The heroes of the *Iliad* and of the *Odyssey*, the Christians of Tasso, the Portuguese of Camoens, were not men who waited for an enemy at home—they had rudely carried their arms into foreign lands. If, indeed, Æneas and his companions form a brilliant picture, it is because the splendour of their destiny outshines their past misfortunes, and the destruction of Troy was necessary for the foundation of Rome. Even Satan, in the poem of Milton, is an assailant. Success, unclouded by defeat, is the essence of the epopœa, as the soul of the hero is glory.

A province in which the Spaniards excelled at a very early period is fictitious history, in which the ludicrous deficiencies of their country are represented with great truth and humour. One of the first writers was Mendoza, whose comical romance of *Lazarillo de Tormes* is an admirable example of what Spanish critics call the *gusto picaresco*, or low life. Some of the productions of Quevedo, in the same style, have infinite merit.

But the prince of all who, in any age or country, have followed this career, is Cervantes; and no novel, perhaps, in any language can be compared with *Don Quixote*. Yet, even independently of this most exquisite work, the reputation of the author might as fairly pretend to immortality as that of any novelist of Europe. His *Novelas Exemplares* have never been surpassed, and his countrymen esteem his *Persiles* and *Sigismunda* almost as much as his *Don Quixote*. The most exquisite characters that ever were drawn in fictitious history are the knight and his squire; and the skill

with which they are contrasted makes them still more admirable. The former all ideal—braver than Achilles—more generous, true, and loyal than duty or honor can make men—rational upon every subject except one, but totally abstracted from reality as soon as that one occurs to his mind—with so many claims to our affection and respect, is a constant object of ridicule. The other, the essence of selfishness, of sensuality, of cowardice, of idleness, of cunning, whom we despise almost as much as we love, always becomes our ally in laughing at his master—so well does he redeem his little vices by his good nature, his faithfulness, and his proverbs. The delight alone which the Spanish nation find in this wonderful romance, in which their own manners, mind, and country are so exquisitely depicted, must place them high among the intellectual nations of Europe.

The condition of the Castilians was a fertile subject for the pen of those who delight in painting extraordinary habits. The central position of that kingdom, which cut it off from maritime exertion—its constant military efforts, which taught it to believe the sword more honorable than the ploughshare—its success in uniting to itself, as to a nucleus, all the other provinces of Spain, gave it the lazy pride which caused so many ludicrous contrasts. These have been most feelingly described in *Lazarillo de Tormes*, where the Castilian nobility are represented in absolute want, yet disdaining to work—preserved from starvation by their wits—swallowing a morsel of dry bread—covering their rags in their mantle, and then appearing in public with an assumed dignity, which is their summum bonum.

In real history, the Spaniards were not quite so successful, though even in this department their attempts are far from being without merit. In many countries the early chronicles were the work of monks, but in Spain Alphonso X. had given them in charge to a society of historiographers, the greatest part of whom were knights and poets, and this institution was maintained by his successors. Their first labours were in biography, but a classic work at length appeared upon the history of the wars of Grenada, by Diego de Mendoza, author of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, and who, with the exception

of Machiavelli and Guicciardini, is the first modern historian that can bear a comparison with the ancients. His chief model seems to have been Sallust, but the constraint of despotism is throughout perceptible. The society established by Alphonso X. still continued to exist, and even Charles V. dared not abolish it; but the liberty of writing was taken away, and Ocampo wrote a chronicle of Spain which began at the Deluge, and cautiously ended with the second Punic war. Philip II. was still more severe than his predecessors; yet in his reign appeared the great historian of Arragon, Zurita, who undertook, by desire of his sovereign, to show the manner in which the constitutions of his country grew out of events; but the two historians the most known at this day are, the Jesuit Mariana, and Antonio de Solis. The former wrote the history of his own country—the latter, that of the conquest of Mexico. The danger and difficulty of such enterprises in those times may be appreciated by the persecution which Mariana underwent from the Inquisition, although his work was dedicated to Philip II.

At a very early epocha Spain was the seat of Moorish science. All that the Arabians knew of astronomy and astrology, of chemistry and alchemy, of medicine, of algebra, of philosophy, was successively carried into their European possessions; but the Spaniards themselves have not been proficient in any of these branches of knowledge, and though they deserve to be recorded as early transmitters of what the orientals had saved from the wrecks of Greek philosophy, they have no names which can be mentioned along with Galileo, or any seminaries of such general utility as the universities of Italy.

In sculpture and painting the Spaniards have little to boast of as inventors: they derived all they know from Italy. Some of their painters, indeed, may vie with their masters, and have most successfully rivalled the brilliant colouring of the Venetian school. Morales, surnamed the Divine; Ribera, better known as Spagnoletto; Velasquez de Silva; Murillo, who treated every subject with equal success, were the ornaments of their nation in the fine arts.

The difficulties of Spain were not the most proper to produce the best development of intellect, because the principal one was oppression by a foreign enemy. Hence arose the leading deficiencies of the Spanish mind; the want of philosophy which pervaded every province, the drama no less than history and science; and kept it below the level which it had reached in the departments of literature where depth of reflection is less necessary.

The country of the indigenous poetry of modern Europe is now silent; and the language in which its first strains were heard, is forgotten. Thus far a resemblance might be found between the muses of Greece and of Provence; but a difference which still more strongly marks them, is, that the latter has not left a work which has conferred immortality upon its author, or made posterity regret the loss of those which have not been handed down. What does remain of the poetry of the troubadours, and of all the rhymers who sung in the south of France, before any other country possessed a literature of its own, is interesting, not so much on account of its intrinsic value, as because it gives a picture of a period which has left few other records. It portrays an age of chivalry; but, more like a dexterous than a faithful artist, it flatters its original. Chivalry was the ideal beauty of a feudal world, whose reality possessed but little charms, though, when embellished by fancy, it enlivened the poet's song.

The south of France was divided among many petty sovereigns, who encouraged the learned and ingenious men that brought new knowledge from Spain and Italy; and their principal occupation was fancy. Love and war, in which true knights delighted, were the themes of every song, and troubadours became innumerable; but no other subjects inspired them. Religion, which has furnished rich materials to the poets of every creed, was barren in their hands; and only bound their imaginations in the trammels of superstition, without imparting the fire of enthusiasm. It never furnished them with a brilliant image or a noble sentiment. Their love, too, was not feelingly expressed; and was only hyperbolic gallantry and affectation. In the

course of three centuries their poetry, although so widely cultivated, and admitted in the court of every sovereign, made no progress ; and is now, together with the dialect in which it spoke, forgotten.

Many causes have been assigned for the sterility of this earliest European poetry, written in the first-born tongue of modern literature. The troubadours themselves attribute it to the degradation in which the jongleurs (*joculatores*), public mountebanks, were fallen ; and with whom they were often confounded. But the principle of their decline was very different from this. They appeared in the dawn of civilisation. No great events had preceded them. In lieu of a fabulous and heroic age, filled with mythology, as in Greece, they had a barren and confused antiquity unfit for poetry. They were ignorant of every moral and physical phenomenon ; and, unacquainted with the classics of Greece and Rome, they could not copy either nature or her imitators. The poetry which draws from no source but love and war, which calls to its assistance none of the great works, none of the stupendous feelings of nature, must be short-lived. Imagination is essential to poetry ; but imagination alone cannot supply all its demands, and the most fanciful department of intellect must still derive its best cultivation from reason. It was on this account that the *trouveurs* to the north of the Loire or of the *langue d'Oil* were really superior, even in imagination, to the poets who belonged to the *langue d'Oc*.

In the social progress of the French, reason is proportionally less predominant than imagination ; and for this reason, the latter function is not strong enough to fulfil the purposes of true poetry. The French, nevertheless, on all occasions, lay claim to it, and never commit an error or a crime, without imputing it to an excess of imagination. A few observations upon the peculiarities of this quality, as it exists in their minds, will make the nature of their poetry and of their philosophy more conspicuous.

The easy grandeur of France has seldom compelled the great and opulent to seek the assistance of inferiors, and the value of the people has not been duly felt. The high and

powerful in their successive feudal gradations have monopolized influence, and stamped their character on every national concern. The history of France is the history of a court, and the business of courts is littleness. It was in them that her poetry always has been protected, because there alone were to be found the cultivated faculties which delight in the works of fancy. But, however polished the language of such assemblies may be, however elegant their conceptions, their imaginations must be restricted. They have no intimacy with nature, and do not suppose they injure her, when they attempt to confine her incoercible spirit. As the French did not either know the difficulties which enlarged this faculty, or live surrounded by the sensual excitements which might have given it the splendid and voluptuous raciness of the East, their imagination is deficient in brilliancy as in philosophy, and is not either rich or great, splendid or solid.

But it may be asked, are the French then deprived of this faculty; or, if they are not, on what occasions does it appear?

Imagination may be predominant according to two different modes. The one is when it really is very abundant; the other, when its antagonist faculty is so weak as to be easily subdued. Now the antagonist faculty of imagination, that which keeps it in due subjection, and prevents it from becoming too excursive, is judgment; or the plain and downright quality called common sense. A very little imagination, joined to a very little common sense, may, in many respects, produce the same apparent results as a large portion of the one with a large portion of the other; in the same manner as, in mechanics, a strong momentum balanced by a strong resistance, and a weak momentum balanced by a weak resistance, may be alike in equilibrium.

Now the imagination of the French, poised by a little judgment, has freer scope to show itself than if both were in better proportions. It is incapable, however, of taking a part in any but the very small concerns of life. It can stuff the language of common intercourse with petty and unvarying metaphors, and substitute similitude for identity.

It can treat the great affairs of this world with levity, and trifles with importance; and is ever ready to enter into any pact which promises fair to fancy, without enquiring into its probability or its advantages. But were the imagination of this people really uncontrollable, would it not break out in epopœas, rather than in declarations of the rights of men\*? Would it not fire the souls of tragic writers, rather than of legislative bodies? Of all the nations of the globe, ancient or modern, who ever had any poetry, there is not one which does not surpass them in all the qualities which depend upon the reach and grandeur of imagination, enlightened and enlarged by reason.

Another quality to which the French lay unquestioned claim, is taste. Few matters are more liable to dispute than this; however, it may positively be asserted that, to refine upon nature till all her greatness is effaced, is a very inadequate theory of beauty.

No subject could be proposed to French minds so little impressive as nature, whose charms they never know, unless buried under meretricious ornaments. Of this the general aspect of the country is sufficient proof. Even where hills and vallies undulate, and fertilising rivers flow; in provinces where all the elements of rural beauty have been lavished under the most cheering sky, fewer attempts have been made to embellish them, than in the less fortunate districts of other countries. The portions set aside for luxury and pleasure show but presumptuous attempts to raise a triumph on the subjugation of nature. Trees are planted with mathematical regularity; banks are notched into terraces; streams are forced into canals and jets; and shrubs are drilled in diminutive rows of painted boxes. The human form undergoes a similar mutilation, and hoops, perriwigs, and powder, are French improvements.

Poverty of imagination and perverted taste have created a language deficient in harmony, and fearful of enlarged expressions. To bind it down to lasting poverty, an academy watches over its purity, and protects it from

\* Trial by Jury was officially proposed in France as the subject of a prize-poem.



becoming more capable of answering the new demands of thought. Among a glowing and imaginative people the commonest expressions savour of passion and fancy, and the idiom itself breathes poetry. But in the courtly tribes of France, language became precise and polite ; an instrument of flattery and facetiousness, and admirable for the little turns of conversation, but not poetic. As the public to whom the bard appealed were sovereigns and courtiers, the words and thoughts which were not current among them were excluded from poetry. It is not by such aids as these that Homer has been honored by successive ages. It is not by the arts and finesses of language that Sophocles, Æschylus, Virgil, Horace, have come down to posterity ; and the inspired strains of the Hebrews were taught by no learned institute. Better sure it is that a thousand exuberances should disfigure speech, than that passion should be bereft of its eloquence by cold academies and heartless courts.

The man from whom the modern poetry of this nation takes its date is Clement Marot, who died in 1544, after flourishing during the reign of Francis I. A silence of two centuries and a half succeeded to the songs of the troubadours, and the two southern nations, whose literature has been discussed precedingly, had much the start of France in the flights of imagination. The Italians had already had their Dante, their Petrarch, their Boccaccio, their Ariosto ; and Tasso came into the world the very year in which Marot left it. In Spain the Chronicle of the Cid had the priority by four centuries ; the royal poets, Alphonso X. and XI., and Peter III., of Aragon, by two. Mena, Villena, Santillane, and the court of John II., by one ; and Rueda, Naharro, Boscan, Garcilasso de la Vega, were nearly his cotemporaries. Even Portugal had been honored by Miranda and by Camoens, before the death of Marot ; and the last of the southern nations which cultivated poetry was France. In no country, too, did the progress of this art less follow the order of nature than there ; for French verse did not begin with individual feelings, and then proceed to collective passions, but rushed forwards almost immediately to the latter. Thus Jodelle, the first tragedian, was almost the cotemporary of Marot the first poet ; and the earliest lyrist,



Malherbe, he who contributed so much to reform his language, died near a century later.

It is a bad omen for the poetic fire of men, when their strains are not imposed upon them by strong feelings; and when they merely consent to poetise, because it is decorous for a civilised people so to do. The compositions which preceded Marot, whether it be the ancient rhymes and romances of the tenth century, or the later productions of his immediate forerunners, were not esteemed; and all things show that the poetic disposition was weak and tardy. The faults of these men, whose blemishes naturally should have been rudeness and simplicity, were pedantry and affectation.

To this first epocha succeeded the period fashioned by Malherbe, with whom the lyric poetry of France commenced. Malherbe was fortunate enough to correct his language, and to improve its versification; and his walk was more grand and dignified than the amatory verses of Marot. But though sometimes enthusiastic, he was deficient in inspiration; neither was this quality more amply shared by his successors, J. B. Rousseau and Lebrun. The two principal ingredients of lyric poetry are an elevation approaching to rapture, and a harmony approaching to music. Now, in both these requisites, the three poets just mentioned are deficient; nor do any lyric productions of the nation, as the choruses of *Athalie*, of *Esther*, the famous ode, by Boileau, on the taking of Namur, redeem these defects.

The third epocha of French poetry begins with the man whom that nation unanimously denominated the father of their tragedy, the great Corneille. It contains the most brilliant names which their literature can boast of, and belongs to a period which they have designated 'as one of the great ages of the world—the age of Louis XIV. The department, however, which has been the most generally and successfully cultivated, as well in that as in other times, is the drama; and Corneille, Racine, Crebillon, Voltaire, Molière, could not be equalled in all the other walks of French poetry taken together.

The theatre is particularly analogous to the mind and

disposition of this people. It offers something like occupation in the shape of amusement; an appearance of study in a diversified and lively assembly; and takes from the one its application, from the other its solitude. It is a magic fairy ground which can be trodden without effort, and equally enchanting, whether the object of admiration be the author, the actor, or the audience. For the poet, too, it has inexpressible charms; for, instead of applying to every plodding reader, one after another, he collects his clients night after night in one brilliant circle, and receives his recompense in thunders, shouts, and clamours. To men who derive more satisfaction from hasty and noisy applause, than from the slow approbation conferred upon other literary successes, the stage has peculiar attractions; and it is there that poetical ambition has always endeavoured to find its vent in France.

From its very outset the French stage followed a contracted path, from which it never since has deviated. The first attempts at regular dramas were translations from the Greek, which certainly would not have prevailed at so early and unlettered a period, had any tragic originality existed. To these translations may be attributed the adoption of a theatrical code, of which the French conceived the Greek tragedies to have been the models, and Aristotle the legislator. To begin by such rules as the unities\* of time, place, and action, before the wildness of native genius had pointed out their expediency, is an extraordinary proof of frigidity.

Corneille possessed a powerful and elevated mind; but, of all the epithets which have been bestowed upon him, that

\* Of the rules of Aristotle, but one is founded in native unity of action; yet even this is to be accepted with latitude, as many inferior and collateral actions may converge toward the main and leading interest. As to unity of place, it has its origin in France—in the puerile severity with which that nation, relax on every serious matter, legislates to its pleasures; and unity of time can be tolerated by those only to whom the human heart is not an interesting object, and who are satisfied with seeing the human heart, for an hour or two, in a fit of fury, without desiring to follow it through a longer development of passion, and through the rise and progress and catastrophe of its mazy feelings.

of creator seems to be the least appropriate. He hardly, indeed, created anything ; and the improvements which he introduced into dramatic diction were not of such extraordinary merit as to deserve the praise bestowed upon them. He found his first subject, *Medea*, already treated by *Seneca*. His second—that which brought him home the most ample meed of envy and renown—the *Cid*, was entirely taken from two plays of *Guillen de Castro* ; and so tastelessly curtailed, in order to comply with the observance of the rules, that the finest and most characteristic scenes are omitted. At every step the unities impeded him \* ; and all the deference of his countrymen did not embolden him openly to avow that he could not carry on his plots without a change of place, and an extension of time. The mind of this poet has often been called more epic than tragic, and not without some truth.

The most polished of the French tragedians, and, indeed, of French poets, is *Racine*. Yet even he cannot be applauded for originality or genius : his merit lies in the finish and the execution, not in the conception of his works. He has overcome, with so much apparent ease and gracefulness, the obstacles which the unities threw in his way ; his poetry is so chaste and faultless ; his versification is so smooth and flowing ; and his whole composition so perfect, that it is impossible not to admire him. But the poetic impulse was not strong in him. It led him no farther than to try how much might be omitted, rather than how much might be done, without endangering success ; and, while he has guarded against the minutiae of criticism, he has incurred the more tremendous charge of escaping petty blemishes, by sacrificing more magnificent beauties. The veneration paid to this poet has confirmed the national predilection, which makes genius consist in surmounting artificial difficulties, and has deferred the hope that French tragedy may one day admit the representation of the whole human heart without mutilation.

\* Thus he was perpetually driven to commit some absurdity, and ~~reduced~~ to the pitiful subterfuge of printing his plays without specifying where the scene of action lay, in order to evade the accusation of altering it when necessary.

Crebillon was the reverse of Racine. His conceptions were deep and tragic; his execution was incorrect. His neglect of inferior beauties; his defective diction; his general want of care and finish, have deprived him of the lasting fame to which his genius entitled him. It is true that, in seeking to be tragic, he often inspired more horror than pity and terror.

The poet of France who gave the largest range to tragedy was Voltaire. This extraordinary man, the subject of many contradictory opinions, has rarely been judged but by partiality or prejudice. That his mind was of superior power is undoubted; but that genius is the epithet by which it should be characterised is less certain. He was a man who never could have invented either a saw or a file; but, these tools once in use, he had ingenuity enough to file with a saw, and to saw with a file. Taught principally by the English, he applied philosophy to the poetry which he could not have created; and made the abstract truths of reason, which he never could have discovered, amusing. Had it not been for Corneille, Racine, Crebillon, and Shakspeare, he never would have written a tragedy. Without Tasso and Milton, the *Henriade* would not have been produced; and his philosophy he took from Newton. The faculty in which he may lay the justest claim to originality, is wit; but no single faculty can constitute genius. Voltaire was endowed with the largest share of those mental qualifications which are bestowed, in ordinary portions, upon common men, and shone by their excess; but he did not possess the great and vivifying principle which animates creative minds.

This extraordinary writer, taking example particularly from Shakspeare, allowed a wider scope to tragic passions than his countrymen had done. The best and most affecting of his tragedies—the only one indeed, on the French stage which commands tears—is *Zaire*, the leading passions of which he took from *Othello*. But he was not exempt from the faults of his predecessors; and, even in admiring him, it is impossible not to feel that his delineations are more ingenious than true; more pretty than grand; more the result of cleverness than of inspiration.

The comic muse of France boasts of one name which stands upon the highest eminence, Molière. Yet this author is rarely original in his plots; and many of his comedies are borrowed from his Latin predecessors. The qualities in which he shines are mirth and wit, united to a *vis comica*, which never have been equalled in France. But when the French critics assert him to be superior to all comic poets, ancient and modern, there is much danger lest the extravagance of the eulogium should excite a scrutiny unfavorable to their countryman. In the plays which he borrowed from Plautus and Terence, he certainly did not rise superior to his originals; and in the delineation of comic character, he has been far indeed surpassed by many British dramatists.

A long list of comic writers accompanied or succeeded Molière; but great comedy is not the walk in which the French excel, and their farce is the lowest of buffoonery. Between these two, however, there is a species of light comedy, depicting, not so much the humours of individuals as the follies of society, the whims of classes, the manners of salons, boudoirs, and places of inferior resort. In this walk the productions of the French are admirable, and, although the first conception of such plays as the 'Cercle,' or the 'Soirée à la mode,' as 'La Gageure imprévue,' &c., is of a lower order than that of the Tartuffe, or the Misanthrope, yet the execution is so perfect, the picture is so faithful, that the superiority of French comedy in this inferior department must be allowed. The division of society into classes left no room for individual humours, and a leading defect of the French drama is the want of individual character. As to epopœa, the attempts at it have been so wretched, even including the Henriade, that they are best honored by omission.

The circumstances which were unfavorable to the inspired and harmonious diction of the French, gave them opportunities for cultivating tamer language, and prose soon became precise and easy in their hands. The eminent prose writers of France would form a much more respectable list than her poets; yet the defects of the former may be trace

the same causes as those of the latter, and the want of enlarged perception, which curtails her poetic powers, also limits the reach of her historians, her philosophers, and her orators.

The eloquence of the French, instead of being rational and argumentative, is sophistical and declamatory. The branch of oratory in which the Greeks and Romans excelled was prohibited to this nation until the end of the last century, when it burst out with all the fury of inexperience. It consisted in passion, and in rage against past subjection; its first votaries were the enthusiasts of visionary freedom, which they were incapable of practising. In the factions which succeeded, after the first assemblies had completed their demolitions, public speaking declined; under the tyrants of the revolution silence was safety, and remonstrance death. Since liberty has put on a better appearance, and since it has been decreed that to debate shall be no longer dangerous, political oratory has not revived, and its chief improvement consists in an increased employment of vituperating tropes.

The eloquence of the bar in France was, and is, nearly null. It shone out, indeed, feebly upon some very rare occasions, but it was not habitual: where the voice of the law is not all powerful, it has no motive to raise itself, and when it is heard, it should be signalised by argument—not by declamation. Impassioned eloquence should be listened to with diffidence in the pleadings of justice.

The place which, in France, was left the most open to oratory was the pulpit. The Catholic worship admits of greater embellishment than can be employed in sedate creeds, and the pathetic unction of Fenelon, the majesty of Bossuet, the religious austerity of Bourdaloue, the elegance of Massillon, are monuments of sacred eloquence which it would be difficult to surpass.

The history of every country must be in proportion to the events which have occurred in it. Now, few could be found in France which could give a moral greatness to historical relations. The narrations of the Greeks, who long stood at the head of the species, might be grand and exalted. The

Romans, who displayed the most profound political combinations of antiquity, were also a lofty theme for the philosophical historian. The Jews were the people of God, and their history was told by inspired writers; but the occupations of the French have always been too trivial to excite general respect. The nation at large has seldom suffered under any great difficulties, except such as they brought upon themselves, and, as they were speedily extricated by the healing power of their natural situation, they offer no picture of generous struggles against adversity. In all the vivacity, in all the ingenuity of the French—in their literary, in their military splendour, there is not either the dignity of intellect, or the energy of character, which could furnish materials for such a portrait as Tacitus would delight to trace. Their chief excellence has been in war, and their success has been principally won by the physical resources of the country, led on by an ardent military spirit; but war, and courage, and martial ardor, without internal policy, without political wisdom, may afford a brilliant, but not an instructive page, to those who study mankind in every varied shape. The deeds of France were first recorded in chronicles written by monks, and in Latin. Joinville and Froissart were among the earliest who wrote in French, and their naïveté still pleases. Philip de Comines painted in sombre colours the court of the dissembling Louis XI.; Brantome was an amusing compiler of anecdotes; Sully, Perefixe, are interesting, because Henry IV. is so. It is much to be regretted that De Thou did not write in French. Mezerai, sometimes too familiar, sometimes almost eloquent, is superior to Daniel, and even to Velly, and his continuers; Bossuet needs no eulogium; St. Real, the alleged rival of Sallust, was not always correct; he who, by his vivacity and his variety, came the nearest to the historian of Cataline, was the Cardinal de Retz, in his *Mémoires*. To these succeeded Vertot, the Pere d'Orleans, Du Bos, and Rollin, the most eloquent and easy of all, but whose history is too much reduced to the level of youthful understandings. Two men of great talents flourished about this time—Montesquieu and Voltaire. It is much to be regretted that the history of



Louis XI. by the former is lost. The latter, though often indulging in a style unbecoming of history—though too licentious, too sarcastic, too jocose, possessed nevertheless more of the powers which constitute the historian, than the generality of his countrymen. Condillac was but indifferent in this branch of literature. The most distinguished in later times, is Rulhieres.

A species of historical writing, in which the French excel, is memoirs. Anecdotic information, stories relating to individuals, the gossipings of society, are particularly congenial to their minds, and vanity is not misplaced in such light and flippant productions. The list of memoirs, written by persons who were actors in the scenes which they recount, is very extensive, and their liveliness gives great animation to their personal narrative ; but the best of these compositions must be viewed as portraits, not as groups of persons, motives, or events.

A similar inaptitude for combining great effects has condemned the French to inferiority in the composition of fictitious history. The oldest monuments of their literature are romances, and even metrical romances. The first of these, composed during the reign of Louis the Young, was succeeded by the romance of the Round Table, and the Twelve Peers of France. Foreign romances were introduced in the sixteenth century, among which were some happy imitations from Boccaccio ; and in the time of Anne of Austria, Spanish literature had great influence. But the leading defect of all French novels is, ignorance of all the great features of the soul \* ; and their merit consists in the style, the manner, the delineation of trifling emotions, of the passions of a drawing-room, and the frettings of a bou-

\* The writings of Calprenede, of Mademoiselle de Scuderi, portrayed the mixtures of gallantry and bel esprit then prevalent ; but all their personages, though taken from antiquity, wore the modern French dress. The Roman comique of Scarron exposed the follies of its day, and, though grotesque, it is still read. The 'Memoirs of Grammont are eminently amusing. At length Gil Blas appeared, and Le Sage still ranks superior to all his rivals. The merit of this very delightful performance, however, does not so much consist in faithful portraiture, as in amusing incidents and situations, and in the lively mode in which they are related.



doir—of the anxieties of coquetry, and the affectations of gallantry. In every literary composition of France, of whatever nature, the quality which must not be expected is, the philosophy of the heart.

The same deficiency has contracted the sphere of the moral and political sciences. All that has been said or written upon these subjects is narrow and contracted, or else exaggerated. Ingenuity in catching unexpected glimpses, and quick perception of superficial coincidences in the little relations of life—the undisputed properties of French intellect—are far from being sufficient for the great purposes of policy. They tend to contract the mind, by giving importance to incidents too insignificant to shape the leading interests of society. Hence arose a constant deficiency in sound political views, contrasted with success in political intrigues—in everything where petty motives are more efficient than the broad and general principles of truth and reason. Montesquieu is an exception to the state of political knowledge in his country, and he is little understood there; but he was tutored by many centuries, and, although inferior to his great prototype, Machiavelli, he stands in the highest rank among political speculators. It is remarkable that the earliest moral writer of France is still the best, Montaigne, who, by great originality of thought and of expression, and by a powerful independence of spirit, is one of the most engaging of essayists; but the labours of all these men did not bestow upon the French nation the collective and the practical wisdom which is enjoyed only by civilisation and pride.

Another branch of knowledge in which France is particularly deficient, is mental philosophy. The founder of true logic there was Des Cartes, though he often erred by deviating from his own rules. The *Logique du Port Royal* soon followed, and Mallebranche pointed out the fallacy of our senses, and the illusions of our imaginations, as fertile sources of error. Locke was translated, but the ideas which he had refuted continued to be received until the middle of the last century, when Condillac published various speculations, and gave general currency to the doctrines of the English philosopher. The errors, too, which Des Cartes had taught,

opposed by Gassendi, but inculcated and diversified by Mallebranche, continued to be prevalent long after the period when sounder doctrines had become common in England, and the existence of innate ideas was taught even to the end of the eighteenth century.

When the opinions of Locke were first introduced, they did not produce the impression which a thorough conviction of their value must always create. Neither were they discussed in the calm and dignified tone which is grateful to philosophy. His admirers interpreted him differently, and the loudest in his praise were they who had the least penetrated the true spirit of his system. The declamations of Voltaire are not of half so much value as the acquiescence of Condillac, even though accompanied by some difference of opinion, and much misconception. The exposition which the latter gave of his doctrines obtained for the commentator in France the title of Father of Ideology. The service which he thus did his country is undoubted, but the additions which he made to the science are small. The accuracy of his exposition, too, may be suspected; and, while he flattered himself that he had made his original more comprehensible, he rather loaded it with new difficulties. The misconceptions of Condillac, however, have been universally admitted and enlarged upon in France, and his defective illustrations have been implicitly adopted by Helvetius, as the grand discovery to which the Englishman owes all his glory.

The French have strangely overlooked one large portion of the British theory—that which attributes to one entire class of ideas another origin, beside direct sensation, viz., reflection; but this is characteristic of their precipitate minds, which, with an undue spirit of generalisation, referred the entire system of intellect to one source exclusively. They are ignorant, too, of all the British philosophers, posterior to Locke, and they can adduce but little of their own on any of the great points of metaphysical investigation. Of the thinking nations of Europe, none have contributed so little as they have to mental philosophy\*.

\* Ethical enquiries were in their infancy even after the exact sciences had

The abuse of the system of Locke, and the reference of all human knowledge indiscriminately to sensation, is the inevitable philosophy of men who make a large portion of their social eminence consist in the easy pleasures which they derive from their senses. Every thing which tends to establish materialism, belongs to the philosophy which attributes all to external sensations; and it is not contradicted by the imaginative religion, which can exist without piety. The scepticism which began with Bayle, but which Voltaire adorned, and made more formidable by his wit and his malignity, and which establishes the principles of metaphysical frivolity upon a philosophic basis, is the most congenial system to French minds.

The proficiency of the French in mathematical philosophy bears a higher ratio to their state of general improvement, and they are more eminent in observing and calculating physical than human phenomena. It may appear strange, that a nation so little calculated for profound or abstract speculations on the latter subjects, should have done so much in the abstruse walks of mathematical researches; but metaphysical and algebraical abstractions are operations entirely different. The objects of the former are, the immaterial properties of an immaterial being, intangible even when correct—demonstrable only as far as probability can reach, and incapable of any emblematical representation; but mathematical inquiries, on the contrary, are, for the most part, directed to sensible objects. In geometry, these objects are absolutely tangible—in pure mathematics they are magnitudes—in mixed mathematics, they are either facts derived from actual experiments, or hypotheses assumed upon analogy; but, in every case, even when the most disengaged from matter, they cannot justly be called abstract,

been cultivated; and many astronomers and geometers were celebrated before a single political writer of permanent reputation could be counted. The very first authority of the age, Mr. Dugald Stewart, has asserted that, in questions respecting the philosophy of the human mind, the French are far behind the writers of this island. Even M. Degerando allows that they owe all their knowledge to Locke; and D'Alembert long ago complained that, however alert and versatile his countrymen were in matters of taste, they always lagged in the pursuit of mental philosophy.

for the understanding considers them in their conventional representatives, a line, an angle, an  $x$ , or a  $y$ , with as little regard to abstraction as if the object, together with its properties, was absolutely submitted to mensuration. To this species of abstraction, the French mind is not unapt; and the rigour of mathematical demonstration forms an amusing episode in the midst of great laxity of ratiocination.

In the mathematical sciences, the French have long been superior to the Italians and the Spaniards, although the latter nation, from their connection with the Arabians, had the priority by some centuries. Yet it was not until the beginning of the sixteenth century that the French distinguished themselves in this career; and Descartes may be considered as the first who, Vieta perhaps excepted, has attained a lasting reputation. Since then, their proportionate excellence in this science has been increasing gradually, and it never stood so high as toward the beginning of the present century, when the labours of some very eminent men brought great additions to the science itself, and their numerous pupils very widely diffused its new forms. A reproach, indeed, has been made to the modern French mathematicians, that they have indulged too much in the metaphysics of analysis, and have surrounded it with too many difficulties. But such an objection would be a dangerous principle in science. Whatever is powerful must be difficult to wield; and if, by bolder methods, new truths are elicited, and older systems continued or rejected, the world must not complain of the time or labour which they cost. It must also be added that the methods by which the late progress has been made in France, are all of Newtonian origin, and among the grandest efforts of the human mind. Neither do they bear anything like the ratio to Newton, which Newton bore to all his predecessors. The names of La Grange and La Place, however, are immortal.

Astronomy has been cultivated by the French since the time of Dom. Cassini, who, born in the Comté de Nice, was naturalised in France in 1673. He had many followers; but their discoveries are few, and not of the highest order. Cassini himself, indeed, made many important observations;

as the discovery of four satellites of Saturn ; of the zodiacal light ; of the shadows of Jupiter's satellites, when passing over his disk ; of the rotations of Jupiter, Mars, and Venus, &c. But the great laws of the science are little indebted to Frenchmen.

The services which the French have rendered to natural philosophy are still fewer, notwithstanding Descartes, Pascal, Reaumur, &c. In optics, they made no discovery since the labours of Descartes upon the rainbow, and refraction in general, to the very late epocha when Malus established the laws of polarisation—a fact which was at least suspected long before, and thus contributed nothing to this science, during the very epocha when, in the rest of Europe, it was making the greatest progress. In natural history, they have had one of the most eloquent prose writers of modern times, Buffon ; in crystallography, Haüy ; in botany, the Jussieus ; all names of the first eminence.

Some strong characteristics of the French mind may be found in their practice of the medical sciences. Medicine consists of an operative and of a speculative branch. The latter has no guide but precedents ; and the endless variety which disease assumes throws much of the hope of success upon the sagacity of the practitioner. The former also has its conjectural part ; nevertheless, by much the largest portion consists in manual dexterity \*. In this the French have, at all times, been proficient, but in the speculative part they are deficient. French physicians may theorise and indulge in metaphorical hyperbole ; but the place where they are inefficient, is the bed-side of a patient. In such an art as this, the beauties of fancy would be misplaced. Yet, in French, its language is entirely figurative, and a doctor of the faculty is allowed the use of poetical licences which would be deemed too bold for Racine.

The last science to be considered is chemistry. In this

\* The picture of an operative surgeon thus drawn by Celsus, has the authority of near two thousand years' antiquity. 'He must not be too old ; his hand must not shake ; he must be ambidexter ; his sight must be clear and penetrating ; his mind pitiless (*immisericors*) ; and he must be heedless of the screams of his patient.'

the French claim much glory ; and the name of Lavoisier has been placed upon the level of the most eminent discoverers. But impartial history declares the little foundation of this claim. Lavoisier, it is true, reduced into a system the great and leading facts which had been made known in his time ; but what he added was extremely small. Great discoveries had been made elsewhere, and three-fourths of the theory had been furnished by foreigners. But the spirit of monopoly laid claim to everything ; and, to support it, the chemical nomenclature was formed by the French junto.

Few nations have created systems whose empire over the human mind has been so weak, and whose duration so brief as the French. The theory falsely attributed to Lavoisier is, indeed, an exception ; but then three-fourths of it were English. At this moment it has received some material modifications, and is fast decaying. But that portion of it which is really British—the theory of heat, for instance, and others—rather gains strength and solidity ; while the assumption of oxygen as the universal principle of acids is subverted, and chiefly by the experiments of British chemists.

The French have done little toward the regeneration or the progress of the fine arts. In painting, they are inferior to the Greeks, the Italians, the Spanish, Dutch, and Flemish. The same defects characterise their painters as their poets : littleness of intention, contempt of nature, and affectation. The exceptions to these defects, however, are more common in their painting than in their poetry ; and it would have been easier for Mignard to have placed upon French canvass the delineations of Annibal Caracci, than for his friend and cotemporary, Racine, to have transported into his native accents the sublimity and the magnificence of Dante.

Whatever the French have accomplished in the concerns of intellect has been done by the stimulus of vanity, not of pride ; and to be remarked is more their wish than to be intrinsically proficient. Though they have most ambitiously cultivated every department of mind, and brought their whole attention to bear upon the sedulous and minute execution of their conceptions, yet those conceptions are so

small—their poetic fire is so languid—their philosophy so shallow—their taste so constrained, and their affectation so prominent, that there is not a single walk of intellect in which they have not been surpassed by almost every nation that has entered into the same career. It is not to their literature or their arts that the French owe their celebrity, but to other circumstances, which remain to be examined in their proper place.

The intellect of the British nation presents a different picture, and affords the fair contrast to that which has now been drawn.

As the minds of the British, since first they were a nation, have been kept in constant activity by natural difficulties, every faculty exactly occupies the place which it is destined to hold. Imagination does not usurp the seat of judgment; nor does an exaggerated severity of reason unduly circumscribe the range of fancy. The rule of taste is nature, embellished by natural ornaments, but not superseded by art. The beauty and the grandeur of intellect consist in the magnitude and in the harmony of its functions; and never was the human mind so complete in every point as in Britain.

An object which seems to have occupied the attention of Englishmen from the earliest times, and almost unconsciously to have monopolised their care, is the knowledge of the human being. It was by men that the inhabitants of Britain helped themselves in their first difficulties; it was by men that the nation rose to greatness; and the most interesting study was the author of the well directed thought and labour by which their hopes succeeded. Their first employment of their minds was human philosophy, recommended by necessity, and practised long before it was reduced to precept. The Romans in antiquity, the British in modern history, are the most striking examples of nations, whose first intellectual progress was in reason, not in imagination.

The earliest political institutions of Britain are proofs that the moral nature of man was better understood there than in any other nation. Before any charter had been



devised, the people had fallen, unwittingly, into the wisest gradations of society, where the importance of every man and of every class was duly manifested ; and where the governed and the governing had reciprocal rights and privileges. The increasing wisdom of every charter, granted since the time of Henry I., the additions constantly made to rational liberty, prove the progress of the nation in human philosophy. Twice in the history of England and France has the former had the priority in the important attempt to establish fixed and chartered modes of government. The Magna charta of Britain was signed in the year 1215; the ordonnances of the French John in 1355. The revolution of England began about the year 1630; that of France in 1788. The average of priority then, in these events, was about a century and a half in favour of England. But the ordonnances of John cannot bear a comparison with the Magna charta of Britain ; and at no era of our history could a period be found so replete with folly as the end of the last and the beginning of the present century in France. The political sciences, says an historian of French literature, owe their origin in his country to the Chancellor l'Hôpital, who died in 1573. But before that time England had many eminent writers on these subjects, as the names of Bracton, Brooke, Coke, Fleta, Fitzherbert, Fortescue, Hougham, Littleton, Statham, Staundforde, and others, evince.

The necessity to which Britons were early doomed, of sounding the depths of human philosophy, has given a character to their poetry, which is not to be found in a like degree in the poetry of any other nation. It is particularly profound in portraying human feelings, sentiments, and passions ; and the English are the greatest poets of the world, only because they are the greatest philosophers.

As the earliest poets are now nearly forgotten, Chaucer may be considered as the father of English verse. He it was who extended the limits of his art, and first made it what it ought to be, a picture of life. The fulness of his genius showed itself in his *Canterbury Tales*, a work under-



taken upon the same design as the Decamerone of Boccaccio, but infinitely more varied. The personages of the Florentine are distinguished by no individual features; but the actors in the Canterbury Tales are likenesses glowing with all the fire of originals. The picture of life, too, which the bard of Britain draws, is vivid as life itself; and seems to give a happy earnest of what her muse was essentially destined to become, the muse of the human heart. Few founders of national poetry ever were so philosophic as Chaucer. No early poet ever had such profound successors.

From the birth of Chaucer, to the time when another poet of gigantic mind appeared, about two centuries intervened; but the chasm was filled by men who deserve to be placed in a higher rank than the secondary bards of any other nation, and who, for the most part, are distinguished by the same characteristics as their great predecessor. Among more than twenty of those who flourished in this period, Lydgate, Skelton, James I. of Scotland, Sir Thomas Wyatt, Henry Howard Earl of Surrey, Sackville Earl of Dorset, Sir Philip Sydney, Harrington, Marlowe, are the most distinguished; neither could such a list, and owning such superiors as Chaucer and Spenser, be produced but in Great Britain.

The allegories of Spenser, adequately sustained through such a number of stanzas, his personification of moral ideas, are among the richest productions of fancy; and, notwithstanding the wildness with which they may justly be charged, almost exceeding the extravagance of Ariosto, his general views of human nature are more profound and varied than those of the Italian. The ideal personages of the former act and think with more truth of character than the heroes of the Orlando Furioso.

The walk to which the spirit of human philosophy is the most essential, is the drama. Various are the views in which this domain has been regarded by different nations. In England it is considered as the ground on which fictitious persons move and act with all the truth of real life, and with more than its vivacity. Hence it has become dear to

the nation by which the study of human nature is regarded as the most important.

Before the appearance of Lord Sackville's *Gorboduc* (1562), and Still's *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (1566), the nation knew nothing better in the dramatic art, than mysteries and moralities. Gascoigne's *Paraphrase of Jocasta*, and Edwards' *Palemon and Arcite*, much admired by Queen Elizabeth, succeeded to these, and were followed by numerous translations from the ancients. But translations did not long satisfy the ardour of the British muse, and imitation of art was soon discarded for original subjects, taken in a wider range, and dressed in the grand beauties of universal nature. Neither did British poets restrict the bold delineation of their themes by fictitious rules, which, far from adding real charms to the tragic muse, take away from it all the grand development of character and passion that make it a living picture of the human heart.

The tragedy of *David and Bathsheba*, by Peele, about 1584, contained more natural expression than was to be found in any modern play of any nation ; and the language is, at this day, less antiquated in Britain, than the language of the *Cid* in France, though the latter was much posterior, and nearer to the epocha which is considered as the Augustan age of French literature. Marlowe was still superior to Peele ; and, though he died at the early age of thirty, he has left lasting monuments of genius. This period, too, was filled by other great names, far superior to the secondary dramatists of other early nations.

It was in the drama that the man who justly may be called the poet of the English nation, appeared, and summed up in his own mind all that is characteristic of the genius of his country. The greatest human philosopher that ever has appeared in the world, be he poet, moralist, orator, metaphysician, is Shakspeare.

If the philosophy of this miraculous being had been shown in any clothing but the light garb of dramatic poetry, his claim to the title just given him would have been undoubted. But the variety of dramatic interests, the most

exquisite imagery, the richest invention, fascinate the reader, who, at first, perhaps, sees nothing in the author but a writer of very extraordinary tragedies and comedies. The smallest merit of Shakspeare, however, is that which strikes the most at first; and his invention, his variety, all that constitutes his poetic superiority, are his most trifling qualifications. Every poet, ancient or modern, is at times surpassed by him, in every requisite of the art. In pathos none can approach him. His fancy is richer than the mind of the patriarch bard who sung the fall of Troy; his verse more polished than that of the first successor of Homer; his sublimity is chaster than Milton's; his inspiration more rapturous than Pindar's. If he was not constantly superior to all men, in all qualities, he has at least left enough to prove that, when the occasion required, he could soar beyond all, and that he united the separate claims of each to immortality. But this he did without drawing assistance from his knowledge of the heart; and, without considering how vast was his philosophy, he stands confessed the first of poets.

Before Shakspeare, no bard could be compared with Homer, for the truth and variety with which his personages were drawn. But, in characteristic painting, he has been far surpassed by the Briton. The true delineation of character consists in painting individuals. In real life, we do not see a class of beings in one single man. To picture this single man in poetry, a leading feature of his mind must first be selected, and then another and another, until an aggregate is formed, of which a second instance could not be found among men. Thus Richard III. is ambitious, cruel, unjust; and so far he belongs to the same class as Macbeth. But the jocoseness, the cunning, the remorselessness of the former sufficiently distinguish him from the latter; and all his other shades of disposition blended together in harmonious proportion, make him such a being as owns no second in the world. The great peculiarity of Shakspeare consisted in an instinctive perception of what dramatic character should be; and his excellence is that all

his personages are individuals, stamped with such various yet appropriate features, that, though many belong to the same class, they all remain distinct and separate. What a crowd of humours are there not mingled in Falstaff ! more, perhaps, than in any four personages of Homer ; yet how clear and lucid is the entire character, and how full and consistent from first to last in every situation ! The concurrence of debility, rashness, paternal enthusiasm in the aged Lear, surpasses almost all the moral paintings contained in the Odyssey. Hamlet is a character which the Grecian poet could not have conceived. In the entire Iliad there is not so masterly a scene as that of the very indifferent play of Troilus and Cressida, in which Ulysses artfully taunts the son of Thetis with the rising fame of Ajax, and insidiously provokes him to think no more of his love, but to return to the war again ; or any image so exquisite as that by which Patroclus seconds his entreaty :

‘ Sweet, rouse yourself, and the weak, wanton Cupid  
‘ Shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold,  
‘ And, like a dew-drop from the lion’s mane,  
‘ Be shook to air.’

The tragedy of Shakspeare, indeed, makes us more intimately acquainted with its personages than the poem of Homer. No human being ever brought together such an assemblage of characters as that contained in his Julius Cæsar, his Antony and Cleopatra. But it is necessary to stop, lest the temptation to name every play, and every character of every play should become irresistible.

In nothing has Shakspeare shown greater superiority than in the dispositions which he has bestowed upon his supernatural beings. The gods of Homer are mere men and women, distinguished from their creatures by nothing but immortality. They are subject to human pains and passions, and seem to have no business or pleasure but to torment the beings whom they had created. The nod of Jupiter, indeed, makes all Olympus tremble, and the ocean is moved by the word of Neptune. But their usual occupations are less appropriate to omnipotence than the pur-

suits of Oberon and Titania are to their fairy natures. The airy spirit enchained by Prospero, the witches in Macbeth, are greater stretches of well regulated fancy than all the divinities of Homer. Certainly more than one hundred characters of Shakspeare's surpass every moral portraiture the world has produced.

A ponderous critic of the last century, Dr. Johnson, has bestowed upon the philosophic bard the strange praise, that the characters of other dramatists are too frequently individuals, but that those of Shakspeare always represent classes. This opinion, if true, would convey the bitterest censure; but fortunately it is utterly incorrect. The same critic, too, seems to prefer the comic to the tragic vein of Shakspeare. Certainly the mirth-moving powers of this great man were extreme, but his tragic muse was equally admirable. He may, perhaps, have more frequently fallen into affectation in the exercise of the latter, because it is more difficult to maintain the truth and dignity of pathos, than the more licentious hilarity of mirth. If, in the one, however, he has fallen into affectation, in the other, he has sometimes degenerated into buffoonery; but buffoonery in comedy is more true than affectation in passion. It would be rash to say that Falstaff required as deep a knowledge of nature as Lear; or so large a share of human philosophy as Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, or all the Romans in his most finished play of Julius Cæsar. Certainly the mass of tragic excellencies in this poet, though marked by more defects than his comic powers, is not inferior; and the fairest judgment would be, that, though more unequally exercised, it is upon the whole more wonderful.

The distance at which Shakspeare stands, before all who have laboured in the same vocation, is greater than that which separates any master, in every other art, from those who come the nearest to him. Apelles was almost equalled by Zeuxis, who was himself deceived by an imitation of nature from the hand of Parrhasius. Among moderns, who could pronounce between the grace of Raphael, the design of Michael Angelo, the brilliancy of Correggio, the colouring

of Titian, and the composition of Rubens ; not to enumerate the list of mighty masters who follow them so near ? or say that the rival sculptors of antiquity, although they waited twenty centuries for an equal, did not at last find him in Canova ? In the age and country of Demosthenes, lived Lysias, Isocrates, and Æschines. Cicero vied with him in Rome ; and Chatham, Pitt, Burke, Sheridan, Fox, were his modern competitors. Aristotle was more upon a level with Bacon, than Homer was with Shakspeare, Leibnitz, Kepler, Galileo, Copernicus. Some great men of antiquity rank nearer even to Newton than any one of the numerous hosts of poets, who have preceded or followed, do to this great master of mankind. Were the rational species who now inhabit the earth to be suddenly destroyed, and no living vestige of their natures to remain, his works would do more to preserve the memory of their attributes, than all that ever was conceived by the children of this earth. Temples, palaces may paint their splendour ; their wisdom may be learned from their policy ; their strength and fury studied in their wars : but the plays of Shakspeare contain the entire being ; they are the only depository of human nature ungarbled, unmutilated ; and they are the monument erected by the mind of man, which should be the dearest to us as the badge and type of the species.

The human philosophy, which, in Shakspeare, was the highest gift that ever was bestowed on a creature, has been shared, in smaller degrees, by every dramatic poet of England, until an epocha came when the public taste, corrupted by foreign imitation, thought grandeur no longer necessary. Every man, and every nation may slumber for a time ; and the empty dream of British poetry was that in which nature was forgotten.

Before this disastrous period, however, the sweetest and the strongest lays had been sung by a series of poets, who could not be matched in the literature of the entire world. The last of these was Shirley, the cotemporary of Corneille ; and thus the genuine dramatic poetry of the first British school ceased at the moment when the creator of the French stage began his work ; so much sooner do the real wants of



nature make their demands than the factitious claims of art. The man who, for the strength and accuracy of his characteristic painting, stands next to Shakspeare, though at an immense distance, is Ben Jonson, the father of true English comedy. What the great bard could do by inspiration, Jonson performed by reflection. After analysing the whims and humours of his fellow-men, and abstracting them from sentient beings, he combined them anew, and produced a crowd of characters, almost as admirable for the skill of their texture, as those of Shakspeare were for the absence of all art. The mighty minstrel—whether, in his magic flight, he swept along the ground, or soared to heights unknown before—rapturously dipped his pinions in the colours of the rainbow. Jonson, before he thought of painting human creatures, had spread upon his pallet all the hues which he had scientifically collected from every variety of nature.

No comic writer of any other nation can vie with Jonson in characteristic painting. Terence and Plautus are much his inferiors. His single play of ‘Every Man in his Humour,’ contains more of this excellence than the entire theatre of Molière : and what a fund of originality and truth is there not in his ‘Alchymist,’ his ‘Silent Woman’ ! His ‘Bartholomew Fair’ is a richer gallery of accurate portraits than the whole repertory of the French stage. How much more masterly is the hand which drew the Epicurean Miser, Fox, and his incomparable compeer, Mosca, than that which copied ‘Harpagon,’ so meagre in colouring, from a Latin predecessor. The Miser of Molière, indeed, is but the skeleton of Volpone ; neither does the Misanthrope of the former come nearer to the Morose of the latter.

Although Beaumont and Fletcher stand far behind Shakspeare and Jonson, they have succeeded in embodying passions and humours in dramatic painting. Racine never gave such exquisite touches of nature as are to be found in the tragedy of Philaster, and in the personages of Bellario, Aspatia, Celtide ; and Cacafofo and La Writ have no rivals among the humorous characters of the French poet, whose wit and satire were so keenly employed against the respect-

able art of healing. The Copper Captain, and Estifania, too, are less farcical, though not less amusing, than Scapin in his numerous cheats. Many of the tragic characters of Massinger are conceived with more force than any in Corneille; and Sir Giles Overreach is a compound of strong and natural feelings, beyond the compass of the French schools. The Sophonisba of Marston, though fifty years prior to the Saponisba of Mairet, is as much its superior as one approved production can be to another. Randolph, Middleton, Decker, Webster, Ford, Rowley, Heywood, cannot be compared with Racine and Voltaire, as classical poets; yet, in uttering the genuine accents of nature, they far surpassed them. Neither could the Italian and the Spanish drama afford such specimens of nature and characters as are contained in the works even of the less remarkable early dramatists of England. Men must become of greater value in those countries before their theatres can be enriched with faithful copies of human creatures.

After the reign of James I., Britain found more tumultuous occupations than poetry. Before the muse could be heard again, two schools arose, both far removed from her genuine accents: the classical, consisting of Denham, Waller, Carew, &c.; the metaphysical, as Donne, Herrick, Cowley. But neither of them could speak the true language of passion; and tragedy remained silent until the appearance of Otway, of whom Lee and Dryden were the principal cotemporaries. The first of these was one of the most pathetic tragedians of the world; the second was insane; the third not suited to the drama. Rowe was tame; Addison cold and classic; Lillo eminently pathetic, but wanting elevation; Southern second but to Otway in true passion; Thomson was correct. But tragedy has not yet risen to her former height in Britain, and is rich only in the treasures of the dead.

The most disgraceful walk in English literature is comedy after the restoration. Though Congreve stands prominent, and many others share his fame, yet the vices imported from the continent by the Prince and courtiers corrupted



it ; and well may Madame de Staël observe, that nothing is less like English morals and manners than English comedy.

A quality which the British possess almost exclusively, is one for which no term exists in any other language, and which, perhaps, has not been very competently defined to their own minds—humour. One thing, however, is certain respecting this quality ;—it cannot exist without an allusion to the singularities of human dispositions. A partial, though not very complete definition of it might be, ‘ wit applied to the observation of character.’ Now, as no nation has such variety, such independence of character as the British, or has studied men so attentively, none can have so much humour, and the humour of none can be so profound. It has always been observed by those too who did not account for it, that the ludicrous in England was tinged with greater depth of thought than in any other country ; and that even in their humour there was something serious. But this quality is not sufficient for comedy, though, in its most caricaturing moods, it has shone in farce. The light comedy of France is the most perfect production of its kind in the world, because it aims at portraying manners, habits, and prejudices, so striking in French society. But the superiority is entirely on the side of the British in every great and in every ludicrous delineation.

In every department of British poetry, a relative portion of philosophy may be found ; and the characters of the *Paradise Lost* are drawn by the same spirit as that which pervades the drama. The mind of Milton was of the most stupendous cast ; and no poet ever ventured so near the verge of the ludicrously great, without falling down the precipice. His very subject was the choice of an undaunted soul, to which mediocrity was unknown ; and the apprehension of failure a total stranger. How different were the divinities which he described, from those which Homer sung. Yet with what superior sublimity did he bestow, even upon his fallen spirits, thoughts and natures of a loftier tone than those of man. His human agents could have no originals in the species, and drew their characters from the

poet's mind. They were in a situation such as could not occur twice; and their mutual affection, their fear and love of God, had nothing in them that was commonly human. His battles, terrific by the machinery which he employs, were still more tremendous as the conflicts between eternal good and evil. Ariosto and Tasso are far behind him in grandeur and magnificence. Even Dante cannot overtake him. Spain and Portugal have nothing which can vie with him. To name the *Henriade* along with *Paradise Lost* would be poetical blasphemy; and, in the whole domain of the epopœa, the names of Homer, Virgil, Milton stand unrivalled. The merits of the Grecian bard were the most extensive and diversified. The Roman was the most correct; the Briton the most stupendous. If England can vie with Greece and Rome less in epic than in dramatic poetry, it is because human philosophy belongs more to that which exhibits man in action, than to that which narrates. The epopœa has other ends and other beauties; but the essence of the drama is the human heart.

The various branches of lyric, descriptive, satiric, and didactic poetry have been cultivated with equal success; and the same spirit of philosophy and reflection characterises them. Of what has lately been called the romantic school, British poets may be almost held as the original founders, and still as the unrivalled possessors. In the school, of which the French now deem themselves the most finished adepts, they, too, have been proficient; and, in every line except the dramatic, have shown more fire and imagination than those of France. If Boileau can vie with Pope in his satires, in the elegance and preciseness of his style, he could not have written the epistle of *Eloisa to Abelard*, or the *Essay on Man*; or given so adequate a paraphrase of the *Iliad*. *The Rape of the Lock*, the legitimate *pendant* of the *Lutrin*, far surpasses it in invention; and the Rosicrucian machinery is conceived with a perfection of grace and playfulness unequalled by the allegorical machinery of Boileau. The skill with which the most insignificant transactions of high life are handled, is extreme; and the mock heroic has attained its classical acmé in the *Battle of the Cards*, which is infinitely

more graceful and more comic than the conflict in which books are hurled about in Barbin's Stall. Akenside is a powerful competitor with the younger Racine. In light poetry, of which Prior, Swift, and Pope are the best models, England may not have anything comparable to the works of Gresset, Gentil Bernard, Dorat, and the more careless productions of Voltaire ; but trifling, which is the great excellence of the French, is not that in which she rises superior. If, in the classic school of dramatists, she has no works so perfect as those of Racine and Voltaire, it is because her mind disdains to curtail the soul of man for the ambition of a phrase or rhyme, or for the puerile glory of overcoming factitious difficulties. If the Greeks really intended the rules of dramatic composition as they are now interpreted in France, it was because the human soul was young in their days ; but the French have no such excuse for persevering in them.

If the poetry of Britain be thus characterised by philosophy, how much more do not the sober departments of intellect abound in the truth and severity of reason.

Almost all the knowledge which has been acquired upon intellectual philosophy and the functions of the mind, is derived from the labours of the British ; and it may be said that, without them, the sources of thought and the processes of the understanding would still have been unknown.

Before the appearance of Bacon, some scattered attempts had been made by other nations to sound the depths of the human understanding, and to establish systems of moral and political philosophy ; but these essays remained shapeless and incomplete, because the time was not ripe for their perfection. But preparation was making for some great burst of intellect, and many important events soon followed. The art of printing, which, in all probability, had often before suggested itself to some neglected inventor, was applied to the diffusion of knowledge. Religious philosophy, after many sad variations, triumphed in Britain and in the north of Germany. Improved navigation had drawn together the remotest portions of the globe, and the most sluggish nations, if they did not contribute to the general progress, were carried along by the current.

The imperfections of the Aristotelian philosophy were perceived by Bacon at the early age of sixteen; and he is said even then to have conceived a plan for introducing a more rational system. So premature a disposition to accurate thinking never before occurred, or, if it did occur, it never was followed by such effects. To lisp in numbers is much less surprising than to philosophise in adolescence.

To establish a comparison between minds apparently so opposite as those of Shakspeare and Bacon, may seem preposterous; but it is not possible for two men to rise to an eminence which almost makes them exceptions to the usual condition of mankind, without possessing many excellences in common.

The object which Shakspeare accomplished was the reverse of that which Bacon undertook. The philosopher investigated the various faculties and propensities of man—the poet put them in action. The profoundest inspirations of reason which ever accompanied the flights of fancy, revealed to the dramatist the deep recesses of the human soul: the loftiest flights which ever raised an argumentative mind to the regions of fancy, sustained the mighty intellect of Bacon; and it would be difficult to decide which were the greater poet, and which the greater philosopher.

The sublimity of Bacon, like the sublimity of Shakspeare, must not be appreciated by single passages or pages. It is better felt by looking back upon the whole construction and concatenation of his thoughts, from a distance at which the mass alone remains distinct and clear, in commanding magnificence. Were the part of Lear to be anatomised, phrase by phrase, but few of his detached sentiments would appear to contribute to so grand a conception as the moral wreck which the injured monarch pictures; but, taken as a whole, they are most awful. In the same manner we may traverse whole chapters of the philosopher, without meeting a thought which, considered singly, arrests our admiration; but when we contemplate the progressive steps by which the end is reached, we are lost in the grandeur of our feelings—and such is the true sublimity of Nature. This great globe is composed of contemned atoms

—the solar system of many such globes—and infinite space is filled by multitudes of solar systems. The breathing world possesses every degree of life from the genius which animates the greatest of mankind, to the being which vegetates without sense or motion. Yet all these elements, however great, however mean, contribute alike to one vast conclusion—the universe.

To particularise the superiority of Bacon would be more difficult than to describe the merits of any other man. It would be hard to say what he was, and not less easy to determine what he was not. He saw quite through the heart of every science, without entering into the details of any ; his province was not to create knowledge, but to show how it is to be created—to marshal the powers of mind—to direct the faculties—to point out the way they are to go. Not a navigator now takes the road to the western hemisphere, but follows the compass by which the forgotten Columbus first sailed—not a discoverer now consults his telescope, his crucible, his electric pile—not a moralist asks of man the motive of his actions, but treads the ground where Bacon first bade him enter. Our ingratitude to both these great precursors of human advancement is the same, and we steer to the flat and verdant shores of Guanahani, or we decompose alleged elements, without bestowing a thought upon either. Every true addition to knowledge so quickly assimilates itself to all that was acquired before, that men soon cease to perceive that it is new.

Many philosophers have supposed themselves writing for an age which was not yet come. None ever so much thought or reasoned for posterity—none ever stood so far before his century as Bacon. Shakspeare painted men as they were, and the truth of the resemblance flashed at once on every mind—but Bacon cannot receive his full measure of praise, until time shall have verified the accuracy of his predictions. Every hour confirms them, and every step which men advance is a further proof of his sagacity. The most improved generations are those to whom his genius must look forward for its greatest reverence, and he will still find his worthiest appreciators in posterity.

About one century divided Shakspeare from Bacon ; the same distance of time intervened between this philosopher and another man, who claims a place in the foremost ranks of intellectual inquirers—Locke. Two persons, indeed, had appeared during the interval, who would not shrink from a comparison with any men who have flourished in other countries, a very few excepted—Cudworth and Hobbes ; but their names, great as were their merits, must give place to so undisputed a claim as that of the philosopher who wrote the essay upon the human understanding.

Mr. Locke does not stand so prominent in the list of great men as the poetical philosopher and the philosophic poet just mentioned. No inquirer, however, exclusively occupied with the nature of the human mind, can be compared with him, and he is one of the men who scarcely find an equal beyond the shores of their favored island. He, too, was succeeded by persons whose researches reflect great honor on the philosophic spirit of his country. It would be difficult, out of England, to assemble such a list as the following :—Beattie, Belsham, Berkeley, Brown, Clarke, Darwin, Harris, Hartley, Hume, Hutcheson, Hutton, Priestley, Reid, Shaftesbury, Smith, D. Stewart, &c.

A science which has entirely arisen in England, though its principles were first reduced into a code in other countries, is political economy, or the theory of financial prosperity. England is the nation that, by the greatest labour, has acquired the greatest wealth, and her thoughts have been constantly directed toward the preservation and good employment of her hard-earned riches. The practice of political economy, almost intuitive there, preceded the regular study of its principles, and the French economists, Quesnay, Vincent de Gournay, Turgot, Du Pont de Nemours, studied it there. It was not, indeed, until after these men had written, that the code of this science was compiled in England, and Adam Smith and Malthus were their successors. The nation that executed was that which did not speculate, and the results may be seen in the national probity and the national prosperity of England. While in France, from the earliest times, confiscation has succeeded to confiscation, and

bankruptcy has been followed by bankruptcy, Britain has maintained her good faith unsullied. While even Louis IX., the Saint, and John, who said that if honor were banished from the earth, it should still find an asylum in the hearts of kings, trifled as they pleased with the claims of their creditors—while Sully and Colbert, two of the most upright ministers whom France has ever known, were open partisans of bankruptcy, Britain devised a wiser and a more honest way to acquit her engagements. While, within the last century, French subjects were defrauded or robbed of sums almost double of the amount of the present British debt—while the disastrous system of Law was followed by the profligate irregularities of Silhouette, of Boulogne, of Lechelles, and these again by the indelicate levity of Calonne—by the impracticable self-sufficiency of Necker—and, finally, by the revolution, which soon eclipsed the glory of all earlier depredations, English legislators were preparing the vast system of credit which has enabled a poorer and a smaller country so often to oppose the world in arms, without a breach of faith; and, more than anything perhaps, has often made twenty millions of islanders equal to about seven times that number of continental antagonists.

The study of the law, the administration of justice, public and private, the theory of equity, have been attended to in England with the same care as the financial prosperity of which they are the guardians, and no country could produce such a mass of judicial virtue and knowledge. In other nations, a few men who stand prominent amid a crowd of great depravity and ignorance, are quoted as phenomena; but Britain has less of these exceptions—or rather, her exceptions would be ignorance and depravity, seated on the throne of judgment. The entire system, not any particular men, is that which with us commands respect, for it is better founded on the principles of human society, and on the philosophy of man, than any which have not the same basis.

An art which has received the greatest development from the political state of this country, is oratory. It has been said by eminent writers, and among others by Mr. Hume, that eloquence has declined in modern times. Its com-



plexion certainly is different from that which it wore in Greece and Rome, but the consequence to be drawn from that change is not that eloquence has deteriorated.

As the end of oratory is persuasion or conviction, a public speaker must adopt the means which he finds most likely to persuade or to convince ; but the nations of antiquity, compared with the generality of moderns, were governed by their sensations and passions, more than by their understandings. These, then, must have been addressed by appeals to feeling, and fancy and pathos were the resource of their orators ; but the modern nations in which eloquence has been allowed to follow all its bents, are proud and rational. Impassioned eloquence they are disposed to mistrust, and to confide only in argument. The former, then, may have been neglected, but the eloquence of reason never flourished as in later empires. The most esteemed orations of Demosthenes are those in which he aimed at inflaming the minds of his fellow-citizens, and awaking their degenerate hearts to the defence of their country. Even Cicero, who spoke to a more philosophic people, never is so admirable as when he addresses himself to the passions ; but since the progress of society in the north has brought the great concerns of men more within the pale of ratiocination, the task of public speakers is to convince. Many are the tropes and exclamations in the Greek and Roman models, which produced the mightiest effects upon the sensitive populace of Athens or of Rome, but which would make no impression upon a British parliament. ‘ This day last year,’ exclaimed Scipio Africanus, in answer to a charge of peculation, ‘ this day last year I won ‘ the battle of Zama ; let us go, my friends, to the temples ‘ of the gods to return thanks for that victory !’—and his accuser was defeated. Such a mode of defence would not now avail a chancellor of the exchequer or commander charged with embezzlement\*. Yet the oratorical movement of the noble Roman was not deficient in conscious dignity, and spoke most strongly to the feelings of the nation. If it

\* And still less the destruction of the accounts which could have proved his innocence ; an expedient to which the Roman resorted when accused a second time.

be true that human affairs are better governed by reason than by passion, it is not easy to conceive how eloquence can be a loser by addressing itself to the understanding. Is it a more arduous work of genius to inflame than to convince mankind? Does a sudden burst of feeling require a greater intensity of mind, than a long chain of inductions? It is true that many oratorical resources are now excluded from discourse, but have not others of equal beauty been introduced? Has not argument its eloquence, as well as excited feeling, and may it not be adorned with as many splendid illustrations? It were a paradox, indeed, to say, that what elevates the mind debases the language in which it is addressed. The orator who can play on human passions at his will may be admired, but still more must the nation be respected that knows how to oppose the pauser reason to the precipitancy of his declamation.

If reason be superior to passion, and judgment wiser than imagination, modern eloquence must be of a higher order than ancient oratory. In England, no oration which could not stand a severe scrutiny would long be approved of. Even the men who would mislead the people must attempt it by the sophistry of reason, not by passion, for the road to their feelings lies directly through their understandings. Even their errors are imbibed in logical forms, and their minds must be convinced or entangled before their passions can be inflamed.

The only modern country in which parliamentary eloquence could be cultivated, till very lately, was England, and the proportion of argument exceeds that of pathos in the discussions of the British senate. The days of Elizabeth might prove this. In the parliaments which met under the Stuarts—the greatest schools in which the political sciences ever were analysed—appeals to passion were less common than in antiquity, and to them the world is principally indebted for the philosophy of constitutional government. The revolution was a time when emotions might be indulged, yet even then the discourses of the leaders were more involved and sophistical than passionate. In the most brilliant era of British eloquence, that which began with Chatham,

and has continued almost to the present moment, oratory became more refined and embellished; but it made more progress in reason than in declamation. When this great man was roused to indignation at the idea of the British employing Indian tomahawks, or at the perverted use which a peer proposed to make of the instruments that God and Nature had put into their hands against their American brethren, he gave scope to passion; but it was not till he had long reasoned on their impolitic conduct that, in a midnight debate, he implored their lordships ‘not to rob the Americans of their last hope at that dark and silent hour, when honest men were in their beds, and thieves alone were waking for their prey.’ The son of this great man surpassed even his father, and, indeed, every known orator, in strength of reasoning—and the first of eloquent logicians was Mr. Pitt. Burke, the most poetical speaker that ever graced a senate, never indulged in imagery until he had luxuriated in argument; and he gave himself up to the torrent of his feelings, only when borne away by the evidence of his understanding. The wit and fancy of Sheridan were employed as seconds to his dialectic, and Fox was still more severe in discarding ornament. In the pleadings of the British bar, pathos is little used; and when too warm addresses are made to the feelings of a jury, the judge not unfrequently cautions them against the seductions of impassioned eloquence.

The eloquence of the pulpit is more reserved in pious, than imaginative religions. In proportion as a subject is solemn and sacred, Protestants conceive that passion should be excluded. The sermons of English preachers are generally committed to writing, and all appearance of extempore delivery is thus avoided. Much of the energy of passion is derived from its freshness, but arguments which come recommended by the sedateness of meditated composition, strike more forcibly upon the understanding than sudden suggestions. Amid the florid eloquence of Catholic France, Saurin, a Protestant, is distinguished for his gravity. So much, indeed, are declamation and art the ingredients of the pulpit oratory of that nation, that the sermons of their best preachers seem to have been written as much in honor

of the divine as of the divinity. The celebrated passage in Massillon, so much admired by Voltaire, is too dramatic for the church, and bears marks of as much literary ambition as any profane specimen of declamation. The eloquence of the English pulpit is demonstrative and calm, and no nation has produced so large a proportion of men eminent for these qualities.

Another branch of political knowledge which has flourished in England is history. The transactions of this nation were not confined to war; and the efforts which she has made to attain the power denied by natural circumstances were of a nobler order. To trace the steps by which she rose to unexampled power, is the most instructive task for those who record the deeds of man.

No modern country possesses a greater number of respectable historians than have appeared in England, from the days of Gildas (A.D. 520), of the Venerable Bede, (A.D. 672), down to the Conquest. Less than five centuries produced more than ten historians, still esteemed for their accuracy. The equal space of time which succeeded gave near thirty, beginning with Ingulphus of Croyland, and among whom are William of Malmesbury, Roger de Hoveden, William of Newbury, Matthew Paris, Matthew of Westminster, Knighton, Caxton, &c. After these came Fabian, Hall, Harrison, Hollinshed, Stow, Speed, Baker, with Bacon, Burnet, Camden, Carte, Clarendon, Echard, Guthrie, Lord Herbert, Milton, &c. These historians may certainly be compared with their cotemporaries in every nation except Italy, particularly Florence; but a day came when England produced Gibbon, Henry, Hume, Robertson, not to mention Harris, Laing, Leland, Lyttleton, Roscoe, Smollet, Watson, &c.; with Ferguson, Gillies, Hooke, Mitford, Stanyan; the authors of the Universal History; and others who employed their talents upon foreign nations. The latter portion of the eighteenth century was the brightest age of historical writing which moderns have seen; and equal to any in antiquity, for the philosophical painting of philosophical society.

Minds which cannot see anything in the events of that

country but a succession of civil wars, judicial murders, changes of dynasty, &c., may, indeed, doubt whether England be the noblest theme for history. But such ills are invariably attached to the pursuit of good upon earth; neither have they been nearly so great in this country as in many others, where the same just ends have not been attained. Italy, France, Germany, have shed more of the blood of their subjects than England; but as the consequences are less memorable, their crimes and misfortunes have been less remarked. Had England continued in the same subjection as other countries; had her present constitution and prosperity not been the results of popular disturbances, she might, to unscrutinising eyes, have appeared to be a quiet people.

The superiority of the British in human philosophy has made them equally proficient in fictitious, as in real history and in poetry. The models perpetually before their eyes give the writers of novels advantages not to be found elsewhere, and by which they have most amply profited. From Richardson, down to the present day, there has been an uninterrupted series of unrivalled merit in this department of literature. What novelist of any language can vie with the author of *Clarissa*, in the details which he gives of his personages; and so to say, in the comprehensive minuteness with which he presents them to our intimate knowledge in their most familiar moments, and stamps upon them the glowing features of individuality:—with Fielding, for the true painting of character, whether by comic or pathetic touches; for humour, for pathos, as in *Amelia*; for the variety and the probability of his incidents; for the involution and the evolution of his plots, as in *Tom Jones*; and for the interest we feel in the fate of those of whom we cannot approve, yet whose failings and whose virtues we recognise as forming a mixture eminently human:—with Smollet, for the coarse and peculiar spirit with which he represents the humours of his *dramatis personæ*, and the aptitude with which they are brought together; in short, with any of our great novelists in the true delineation of men, who, though fictitious, are represented in such vivid colours, and are so like

the existing originals, that we absolutely credit their reality. The period in which we live has produced an author of fictitious history, the most remarkable, perhaps, that ever has existed for the truth and multiplicity of his characteristic painting. The male and female novelists alone of Britain who have written during the last fifty years, surpass all the rivals which Europe could muster against them, in the delineation of character, the knowledge of the heart, and the philosophy of the human being.

In portraying the intellectual superiority of England, it would be idle to enter into such minutiae as may be necessary in treating of other countries. The name of one man, however, must be added to those of Shakspeare and Bacon, to complete a trio of British growth which the universe could not equal; and the picture shall be concluded with those sciences which his genius has enlightened.

The discoveries of Newton\* are at least the double of those made by any other human being. His mind was the

\* Let all that Newton has done be abstracted from the mass of knowledge now in circulation—the fact and theory and laws of gravitation; the laws of motion which govern the heavenly bodies; the mathematical refutation of the vortices of Descartes, &c., and nothing can be produced from the discoveries of other nations equal to what remains of British contributions to the progress of the science:—aberration, the changes of position which have taken place among the stars called fixed; the revolutions of some round others, now well ascertained; the measurement of the diameters of some stars, not long since deemed impossible; the translation of the solar system through infinite space, demonstrated by actual observation, after being long suspected upon one of those grand and general ideas, entirely English, which elevate the whole human mind. In a system, the parts of which are free to move or to be at rest, and which are governed by the usual laws of gravitation, the instant that any one of them is in motion, the others cannot remain quiescent.

In Optics the English have a like superiority. One of the earliest works published upon this science since the revival of letters, was by Peccam, Archbishop of Canterbury, cotemporary with Roger Bacon, and, consequently, near four centuries prior to Descartes. The epocha which divided the latter philosopher from Malus, and which produced no optical discovery in France, was filled in England by the Analysis of Light, by Newton; by the invention of achromatic telescopes, by Dollond; by the gigantic reflectors of Herschell, and by almost everything which is now known concerning light and vision.

In general physics or natural philosophy, what a host of overpowering names might England not oppose to all the world: two Bacons, Boyle, Gilbert, Gray, Halley, Hawksbee, Hooke, Hutton, Priestley, &c.

strongest ever known in pursuing consequences; and he could set out from the most minute and distant point, to reach the grandest conclusions, after tracing them through mazes where they must have been lost to every other understanding. He never fancied an experiment, or attempted an inquiry, or developed a calculation, merely to try whither it might lead, but because he had already presaged the result, and only wanted such demonstrations as might satisfy the sceptic. The only thing which seemed impossible to him was to linger in the precincts of knowledge; for his instinctive perception immediately reached its very centre; and, if he passed through the intermediate space, it was less for his own satisfaction than for that of others. To him the abstract truths of mathematical investigation were almost axioms; and he regretted that the facility with which he perceived them, dispensed him in his early studies from the labours of pursuing them step by step.

It would be difficult to decide which of these three men, unparalleled out of England, without rivals in any age or country, must be considered as the first of mortals; for to one of them that place unquestionably belongs. If the distance at which a man stands before all his competitors be a mark of superiority, Shakspeare is this privileged being. To him, too, appertains the first rank, if the immediate breath of inspiration, blown as it were with life into his nostrils, be that which can raise one human creature above all others. If mental tension, the power of induction and combination, be the first of intellectual qualities, then Newton must be placed in the foremost situation. If a mind capable of elevating itself to a height from which it beheld the science of science, and could generalise on all things, be the most commanding, Bacon is superior to Shakspeare and Newton. The man, however, who differs the most from all who can be called his rivals, is the inspired, the creative bard.

The name of Newton recurs in every branch of the mathematical and the physical sciences, as the greatest of discoverers, and an inventor of the means of discovery. At all times England was renowned for mathematical pro-



ficiency\*. But, since the era of that great man, she has rather remained in the inaction into which her admiration of his stupendous mind had plunged her; while the French, assisted by a Piedmontese philosopher, Lagrange, have obtained a momentary advantage, but by methods of Newtonian origin.

Beside the greater vigour of reflection which is a part of British temperament, and a more inquisitive spirit for great researches, the English, as islanders, have always had the additional stimulus of more extensive navigation, warlike, commercial, social, scientific; and they have never ceased to take the most extensive views of astronomical phenomena and systems. Much as they excel other nations in the long balance of mathematical discovery, their superiority in the vast conceptions of the heavenly bodies is still more decided. In optics, too, they have a like pre-eminence; and, in general physics, what names can they not produce—at the head of which would stand the being, *sui generis*, Newton.

The name of this great man appears again in chemistry, a science successfully cultivated in England from the earliest times. The modern chemical system which, under the appellation of the French theory, has been so much admired, is altogether British†; and was most falsely attributed to Lavoisier. The revision of that theory, too, the correction of its errors by further experiment, the restriction of its

\* At all times this country was renowned for its mathematical knowledge. One of the earliest men distinguished in the science was the venerable Bede. Alcuin taught it to Charlemagne. In the thirteenth century, Sacrobosco, or plain John Hollywood, a native of Yorkshire, was professor of it in Paris. The following were their successors, Roger Bacon, L. Napier (logarithms); Briggs (logarithms improved); Harris, Harriot, Lord Brounker (continued fractions); Wallis (arithmetic of infinites); J. and D. Gregory, Barrow, Hooke, Flamsted (fixed stars); Newton, Bradley (aberration of stars); Hadley, Taylor (increments, his fundamental theorem); Saunderson, M'Laurin, Simpson, Walmsley, Collins, Robins, Landen (residual analysis); Waring, Atwood, Maskelyne, Herschell (whose labours were of British growth).

† The labours and discoveries of Black, Boyle, Crauford, Cruikshank, Hales, Mayow, Kirwan, Priestley, Cavendish, cannot be equalled in the world.

application, which his too hasty spirit of generalization had much exaggerated, is the work of British philosophers.

The medical sciences are enlightened by the same spirit of philosophy. The vicissitudes of a bad and unsteady climate, which lower the general average of health, have turned the strong and comprehensive minds of Britons to study the art of curing diseases; and, as well as the general respect paid to learning and intellect, have cast a share of dignity over the profession which it does not enjoy in any other country\*. The surgical branch of therapeutics has been cultivated with similar success; and though some nations have pretended to a superiority in the operative part—a superiority now lost to them—none ever equalled England in the conjectural and the ratiocinative branches.

Although the fine arts are not the department in which the English have excelled, nevertheless, even here may be found the character of philosophy by which they are distinguished throughout. The bias of the British intellect is less toward ideal than to real beauty. The climate does not favour the production of such delicate forms as abound in the south. The country, though highly embellished, is not animated by the glowing sun of Italy. The epopœa of painting has little to encourage it in the natural circumstances of Britain; but the representation of true life, and of the ordinary state of society, has ample resources.

For these reasons, the most remarkable painter of that country is a man who, taking a middle course between the Italian and the Flemish schools, has attached himself to the study of mankind in general; and has represented scenes of common occurrence with all the truth of philosophy. He painted neither angels nor boors; but men and their foibles never met with so faithful a pencil. Hogarth deserves an eminent place among the men who have no

\* No country can quote such discoveries as have been made in England of late years; the theory and practice of Willis, concerning the brain and nerves; Bell on the same; the speculations of Cullen; the Brownian theory; Darwin's theory of fever; his catenation of animal motions and diseases; association; inoculation; vaccination; the use of mercury in cachexia; ablution with nitro-muriatic acid in complaints of the liver; improved methods of treating fever, as by cotial ablution, &c., with many others.

parallels out of England. His *Marriage a la Mode*, his *Rake's Progress*, contain more acquaintance with men, such as they really are, than all the paintings of the Vatican. Even in this art, where Englishmen want the warm and brilliant graces of the south, they retain their privilege of thought; and the greatest of British painters, since he was not the most poetic, was at least the most philosophic of his brethren. The colours which he spread upon his pallet were the humours of the species, and with these he formed no less admirable productions than Titian and Correggio.

British actors are distinguished by the same depth of thought and feeling, and sometimes neglect the minor graces for the profounder beauties of their art. Garrick never could have had a rival where the art had not been studied.

Among the European nations that may be quoted as examples of the opinions here maintained, the last which rose to modern celebrity is that which, situated in the middle of the continent, is deprived of the extended communications which littoral empires enjoy. The inland position of Germany secludes it from the barter of ideas by which thought is enlarged; and while individual bursts of mind are not uncommon, the whole population does not rank as high as each single talent might entitle it to do.

The lot of every nation which begins its career thus late, must be either to imitate its predecessors, or else to open a new line for itself. The former is easy; the latter requires the most powerful assistance of genius. The first attempt of German literature to become refined was by imitation; in which it indulged so long that it at last became weary, and resolved to revenge itself for its servility by launching out into the most ambitious originality.

The northern nations have no recorded condition which can be compared with the bright antiquity of Greece and Rome. In their progress from barbarism, there has been no solution of continuity, and the Germans of to-day are the cultivated descendants of those whom Tacitus described. It would be impossible to trace a lineal resemblance between the ancient and the modern intellect of Italy; while the

genealogy of the Teutonic mind is uninterrupted from one epocha to the other.

Though German literature, in its present state, is of later date than many others, yet poetic compositions were not wanting even in the earliest times. War songs were heard by the Romans; and this species of lyric verse preceded others in the nation whose modern literature still abounds with them. But a greater and more elaborate work is the Edda, generally attributed to the epocha when paganism began to decline, though not compiled until the end of the eleventh century. In the fifth century the Mœsian Goths, a colony of Germanic origin, became acquainted with Grecian science. In the sixth, the German bards made themselves conspicuous; and shortly afterwards, codes of the Alemannian, the Bavarian, and the Saxon laws were compiled. The large proportion which religious compositions occupy is as early a characteristic of German literature, as the frequent recurrence of the tales of heroes, knights, and arms. The precocity of their muse, too, may dispute with the troubadours of Provence; and there are not wanting literary historians who claim the priority in favour of Germany.

The twelfth century produced the Minne-singers; a class of poets that can boast of a greater number of men of high birth than any, perhaps, in Italy, Spain or France. The first of these, whose works have been preserved, is Henry of Waldeck; and he was followed by at least two hundred, during the single epocha of the Swabian dynasty. These bards of love, as their appellation denotes them to be, often show genuine feeling, and break out in honest strains of unaffected passion. Their compositions were chiefly lyric.

The Swabian period, however, produced both epic and didactic poetry of considerable merit. But the Welkina Saga, the Niflunga Saga, the Volsunga Saga, with all the other Sagas\*, and even the Heldenbuch itself were eclipsed

\* It is well known that the Sagas served as the ground work of the national epics, and a fragment of a *Rittergeschichte*, supposed to have been written about the end of the eighth century, still exists, which appears so evidently

by the *Nibelungenlied*, one of the most extraordinary productions of the earlier periods of modern literature. Replete with the rudeness of the times, it is not without dignity, and has, of late years, created new admiration in its native country. The author is unknown ; but the composition is generally referred to the twelfth or thirteenth century ; while by some it is supposed, in its present state, to be but an older poem put into less antiquated language.

The most brilliant period of the Minne-singers was the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries. Frederick I., though he could scarcely read or write, was their protector. Frederick II., though much used to Italian manners, honored the rude minstrels of his own country. But when this dynasty ended in the anarchy which followed the excommunication of Frederick, and the deposition of Henry, a stop was put to poetical impulse ; and the noble race of the Minne-singers became extinct.

During the Swabian era, intellectual progress had been great. The language had been improved ; prose had been cultivated, and still more poetry. The Saxon mirror of laws and rights had been compiled by Epko of Repgan, as was the Swabian mirror by the Counts of Grimmenstein ; and the public records were kept in the native dialect. Ideas of liberty became more general. In some parts of the imperial dominions, the towns had become republics ; villenage was abolished ; the Hanseatic league had been formed ; instruction had been much diffused ; plain German sense had increased in every rank ; while the simplest citizen in his workshop could repeat the chivalrous songs of the noble Minne-singers. These favourable circumstances joined to former proficiency, kept up the tendency to rhyme and numbers ; and, while the themes and the adepts belonged more to the same class as formerly, the spirit and the love of the art were diminished.

The Minne-singers were succeeded by the Meister-singers, who, far from boasting such distinguished personages as

to have furnished names and incidents both to the *Nibelungenlied* and to the *Heldenbuch*, that it may justly be held as their precursor, and as an authentic proof of the early proficiency of the Teutonic muse.

members of their society, were honest citizens, upon whom the cultivation of poetry devolved; and never was the fate of the muses so singular. Inspiration absolutely became a trade. Poetic corporations were formed, into which the burghers were admitted, after a proper examination; and their reception into the rhyming guild was accompanied with all due ceremonies. Their fraternities extended themselves to the imperial cities; and the entire poetry of the age was monopolised by them. To this epocha may be traced much of the pedantry and homeliness which form the worst features of German literature; and much of that straining after originality which disfigures its genius, and turns it aside from the paths of the truly great, into the mystic walks of the unfathomably sublime.

It would be unjust to say that genius may not warm the humblest breast; but to deliver up the shrine of the muses to the guardianship of persons bound down to manual operations, is surely to degrade it. Instead of the emperors, kings, and princes whom the Minne-singers reckoned, the Meister-singers were obliged to put up with Hans Foltz, a barber, Hans Rosenblat, a map painter, Nunnenbeck, a weaver, and the most renowned of all, Hans Sachs, a shoemaker. The entire fraternity was composed of similar persons; and either the trade was very easy, or poetical inspiration very abundant, since, in the year 1558, the single city of Nuremberg, the Athens of the poetical brotherhood, contained two hundred and fifty Meister-singers; that is to say, about one poet in two hundred inhabitants, besides others who did not belong to the corporation.

Before the writings of Luther, prose had made but little progress. Didactic prose began to be cultivated about the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; and a treatise on metaphysical theology appeared at that time. But a sect of theologians, called the mystics, contributed still more to improve the unmetred dialect of the German language; and, moved by the inexplicable conviction of something superterrestrial in man's nature, they did as much to make

it worthy of so high a theme, as the Minne-singers had done to ennoble the expressions of poetry. Even female visionaries, too enthusiastic to be satisfied with the discipline of the cloister, joined the sect, and lent their grace and tenderness to embellish the sacred doctrines.

The most remarkable of the mystics was Tauler, who was more honored than understood by his disciples. He was followed by many others, celebrated principally as theologians and preachers. At length Luther appeared, who fixed, by rule, the uncertain grammar of his country, and gave perspicuity, if not elegance, to his language. The only kind of oratory for which there was an opportunity, was that of the pulpit, and eloquence could flourish only in religious controversy. History was making little progress. Rhyming chronicles were the only known records of the times; and that this science was still miserably defective, the perusal of the Weiskönig, or narrative of the deeds of the Emperor Maximilian I., sufficiently proves. Nevertheless, Sebastian Franke had already declared that the true moral of history was to shape our own wisdom out of the folly of others.

Many untoward circumstances which weighed upon Germany, had proved nearly fatal to the progress of intellect, and Teutonic literature began to decline. Rudolph of Hapsburgh was chiefly occupied in establishing the internal peace of the empire, and the grandeur of his family. Albert of Austria was unsuccessfully engaged abroad, and lost the Swiss Cantons. Henry VII. was wholly bent upon re-establishing the imperial authority in Italy. But the Germans came into the cradle of the muses as conquerors, and lived in the country of Dante, without imbibing any respect for that great restorer of letters. When the imperial throne returned into the house of Austria, Vienna became the residence of the sovereign; but the influx of strangers made a motley mixture, and banished native feeling from the capital. The broils between the cities and the nobles disturbed the long reign of the inglorious Frederick III. But the accession of Maximilian opened a new scene, and presaged the great events which actually followed. Yet, had not Luther



awakened his countrymen to an ardent feeling for the grandest of all interests, the slumber into which they had fallen might have continued still longer.

The union of the empire with Spain under one monarch was not favorable to letters; nor was Charles V. addicted to learning. Elegant literature was excluded by theological disputes. Latin became the language of the learned; and the schools, the universities, the libraries, which were every where endowed by protestant princes, were the hotbeds of knowledge, but also of pedantry. The stiffness and haughtiness which religionists usually mingle in their discussions, are hardly yet effaced from the best productions of this country.

In this abstract, the real genius of the great Teutonic nation which inhabits the midland regions of Europe may easily be traced. Strong, replete, and healthy, it possesses all the germs of reason and of imagination, ready to burst into thought; but, untutored in the art to wield its own strength, it loses many of its advantages, and has been reduced to imitate other nations\* instead of becoming itself a model.

Its first step in this career was to copy a nation which is itself a copy; and imitations of the punctilious imitators of the fabulous infancy of Greece were sung and said in the wild Hyrcanian forests; and affectedly repeated, through the medium of Versailles, from the Ilissus and the Tiber, to the frozen banks of the Rhine and the Elbe.

But this species of literature did not prosper. Neither poets nor prose writers produced anything great, or attained the polished execution of their models. The elegant levity of the French is quite contradictory to German manners; and the works of Gellert, Gottsched, Hagedorn, Weiss, &c., give a less favorable idea of the genius of the nation, than the writings of any other period.

The most remarkable follower of this school was Wieland—the only one, indeed, to whom the majestic epithet of

\* The art of printing alone had created a neighbourhood among empires which excited the emulation of all; and Germany directed her attention to those which either claimed or deserved it the most.

genius can be applied with justice. Yet Wieland was an imitator—not, however, out of necessity, but because he chose to be so; and he preserved much of his originality even while he copied foreign models. Still, however, he was far from attaining the grace and lightness of the French; and the perusal of his best works is always accompanied by regret, that so rich a fancy should have been cramped by the affectation of little beauties which it could not attain. With him the French school terminated; and the native muse has little to regret that he has had no successors.

The day, however, was not yet come when she was to assert her originality, and she was doomed to another age of servitude. The masters whom she now chose, indeed, were in harmony with her own feelings, and they taught her the nobler but the more difficult ambition of sacrificing the graces of detail, and the minutiae of execution, for beauties of a larger range.

This new and more congenial taste sprung up in the frank and honest mountains of Switzerland, where nature has so boldly set her seal, that no art can ever hope to efface it. About the middle of the last century, two natives of Zurich united their efforts to expose the defects of the reigning taste, and in a periodical work destined to that effect, openly attacked its supporters \*. An English school now followed, and the German muse made a vast step towards the recovery

\* The head of these was Gottsched, a man entirely imbued with French principles, of great erudition, but without real talent, and who entirely lost, in his advanced age, the reputation of which his youth had given promise. He sunk under the attacks of Bodmer and Breitinger; and from the period of his defeat may be reckoned the most brilliant era of German literature. Celebrated men rose up about the same moment, and united their efforts with those of the meritorious Helvetians. Lessing endeavoured to expel the influence of French fastidiousness; and, aided by Mendelsohn, Nicolai, Sulzer, and others, he successfully opposed the predilection of Frederic II., and clung to the literature of England, a country which many natural circumstances had assimilated to his own. His eulogium of Shakspeare brought the great dramatist into universal notice, and awakened the attention of his countrymen to the congenial spirit of British poetry. Several productions which appeared about the same time, seconded the attempts of these men; and the Alps, by Haller, the Messiah, by Klopstock, the Spring, by Kleist, were powerful auxiliaries to their noble cause, and showed the good effects of their patriotic discussions.

their native bias. The works of the men who adopted this system are proofs of its congeniality with the nation, for no names of French imitators could be adduced to vie with the partisans of the literature of these islands, among whom was the greatest of all the continental dramatists—Schiller. This period, too, abounded with merit of various descriptions, and those who did not absolutely espouse the principles, could not escape the influence of Britain. A very long list of names graces this epocha, the most eminent of which may exceed a dozen, and among them Klopstock and Göethe stand the foremost.

However great may be the merits of the author of the *Messiah*, and his contributions to general literature, the services which he rendered to his own language and country are still greater. To him may be attributed the first independence of the German muse, and the vindication of her native claims, without disavowing her connexion with her more advanced sister of Britain. A poem, in which this connexion and this independence are beautifully told, is the true expression of Klopstock's own ambition and acknowledgments, and the patriotism natural to every man must excuse the indecision in which he leaves his reader, as to the triumph of the fair rivals in their race for superiority. The mind of Klopstock was great and towering, and he thoroughly knew that human philosophy was indispensable to such poetry as his imagination could attain; but he did not possess it in the degree necessary to so vast a conception as his poem. He therefore remained more eminent in description and feeling, than in the portraiture of characters and the delineation of the soul.

But still more German than Klopstock was Göethe, who spurned at everything not purely indigenous, and resolved to create a muse not merely belonging to the romantic, or even to the Teutonic class, he employed his whole thoughts to hyper-Germanise all his faculties.

Göethe is perhaps the most remarkable person of the epocha now under consideration, and he may be held as the true representative of German genius. His desire to avoid everything which ever had been said or thought before, was

such, that he at once darted into new regions, and so completely ran astray in them, that hardly a vestige of anything human remains in his poetry, which seems to have been conceived for beings of another world. Amid all his extravagances, however, the great and genuine poet stands confessed, and even his *Faust*, so extravagantly admired by Madame de Stäel, disgusting, horrible, and immoral as it is, is a stupendous production. To know entirely what Göethe could have done, had he not been under the influence of every national defect, his *Herman and Dorothea* must be studied, and the reader of taste will learn to appreciate the man, and to attribute his blemishes to the true cause.

But it is in philosophy, still more than in poetry, that the defects of German intellect are felt, and the soberest regions are the most disturbed by the extravagances of imagination. Still, however, the grandeur of the native mind appears even in its wanderings, and the wild and tenebrous speculations of Kant, and of some of his successors, are the visions of profound understandings; but the desire of going a step or two beyond all predecessors, without exactly perceiving in what direction that step may rationally be taken—the ambition of knowing what, perhaps, it is not given to man ever to comprehend, have led them quite beyond the bounds of reason. The fatal error of making genius consist in mere newness, places no bounds to their extravagances, except those which limit the infinite permutations of human thoughts. The most remarkable person whom Germany has produced is Leibnitz, and it would be difficult to find upon the entire Continent any philosopher worthy to be named his rival. Descartes, perhaps, has the best-founded pretensions to such claim, yet the superiority of the German is indisputable, as well for greatness as for accuracy; but neither of them possessed the penetration of Newton, and both were far from honoring their genius with the same candour and the same ardour in the pursuit of truth, whether moral or intellectual.

Neither have the Germans, notwithstanding many happy attempts, any dramatic poet or any human philosopher, who can bear a comparison with Shakspeare. Göethe and Schil-

ler are powerful claimants, but they want the true philosophy of the heart, to stand upon the same level as the supernatural bard. Yet they had mighty intellects, and have done much, and had they been more moderate in their ambition, they would have done more, and better ; but the perpetual struggle after genius has often made them overstep the modesty of nature, and their personages either are not men, as those of Shakspeare, or else they are more than man, without, however, belonging to any known order of supernatural beings, like the witches of Macbeth, or the sprites and monsters of the Tempest.

Neither is this the worst result of that propensity. Even the religion of the Germans is infected with a philosophy which never should belong to it, and the numerous disciples of the transcendental school have mixed it up with a poetry, of which they knew nothing but the extravagances of unbridled imaginations. It is to Germany that Europe owes the advantages of the Reformation, and a pious creed is the most in unison with the disposition of that sober country : yet nowhere, perhaps, is there to be found a set of people so addicted to return to Catholicism as the disciples of Kant, and Fichte, and Schelling, and of all who have espoused the absurd notions already related concerning genius. Neither could such a motive for adopting the old system of Christianity as they avow be acknowledged by any men but themselves\*.

The same characteristics are to be observed in every department of intellect into which the Germans have penetrated, and they have distinguished themselves by great depth of thought, by vast reach of mind, in the physical and the mathematical sciences. Astronomy, chemistry, natural philosophy, are much indebted to them, and a very long list of illustrious names attest how much the world owes them for their perseverance and industry in many branches. Nothing, indeed, is wanting to make German intellect as mighty as British, but geographical situation, which would put it in communication with all the nations of the globe, and make

\* They say that Catholicism is more poetical than P

it familiar with the experience and wisdom of the whole world.

Among the new nations which have sprung from the loins of Europeans in the west, but one has begun to assume a place in literature, and that nation is the descendant of England. As the United States of America were the first to be independent, as they were the first to be free, and are the only one that has hitherto conceived a rational system of liberty, so were they the first to possess a poet, a philosopher, a mathematician, and a chemist. It is true, the branches of knowledge which such men cultivated are not the most advanced there, because the first want of that country was political philosophy. Other pursuits then yielded to this, and the development of intellectual resources among the American children of England is one of the most remarkable proofs of the principles laid down in this essay, and strongly confirms the doctrine, that the first necessity which men obey is always the most imperious.

The persons who had set out upon their adventurous course from a country which was a century or two before the rest of mankind in freedom and justice, and who had driven themselves into exile, because they found their conceptions of liberty not followed by its adequate practice at home, must have held the study of political wisdom as the most important occupation of man; and they were no novices in the science—their only error was, that they outran in theory, what human practice had shown in those times to be feasible among the most advanced of men. In this new society, all the members of which were men that stood on the very summit of civilisation, the earliest thoughts were ratiocination, and the first accents were unimpassioned and unnumbered. To unite the wisdom of individuals into social force, was their primitive occupation, and their intellectual powers first manifested themselves in the science of polity. They were wise before they were imaginative. They secured the bread of life before they took heed of the flowers which adorn it, well knowing that, in their position, were they to be too solicitous about the latter, they might lose, or at least endanger the possession of both.

But now that society is firmly established—that the tree of prosperity has struck its deepest roots into that immense soil, and must flourish there, the North Americans may turn their minds to other objects, but still they will be seriously inclined. Reason will long continue to have pre-cedency of imagination, and philosophy will have a lengthened priority to poetry. Hitherto they can reckon more remarkable statesmen than rhymers—more adepts in the physical, than in the *gaya sciencia*—and their prose writers are superior to their poets. What, perhaps, may be wanting to them in general is good taste. The persons who founded those colonies were not inmates of the most polished circles of the metropolis; they had generally plain and simple habits, approaching to vulgarity—their phraseology was homely—their thoughts unrefined. The condition of society which chastens literature, has not advanced among them as it has done in England, and the dialect of common life bears many marks of stagnation. Something of the same kind is discernible to British taste in American prose writers; and though there are among them some who would do honor to the best periods of the mother country, yet the general characteristic is a want of that polish which the English language has been acquiring since it was first carried out to the trans-Atlantic regions.

The natural circumstances of America will, in the course of time, incline it much toward imagination; yet that imagination will probably be of the most stupendous dimensions. If the streams of the Simois, and the muddy Scamander, could inspire the bards of ancient Greece, what may not the waters of the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence work in the mind of some future poet of Louisiana and of Canada? If Olympus was peopled with fabulous gods—if Atlas bore this earth upon his top, and Ida was the judgment-seat of Paris, when he decided the mighty cause of beauty between contending goddesses, what divinities shall not be seated on the Andes—what worlds shall Chimborazo not support upon his hoary head—and how many Idas in that vast and varied land shall not see more charms than adorned the heathen Venus? If all that is grand in material nature can



make the mind majestic—if the same mighty hand which stamps such gigantic features on the physical world, gives, in the same proportion, the comprehension which can be duly moved by them—the utterance which dares to express its admiration, the intellect of the new continent must become the most sublimely imaginative of any that has yet dwelt in human forms.

The literatures which have now been examined—the state of science and of mind in the many countries which have distinguished themselves, demonstrate that reason is the companion of pride, and imagination the playmate of vanity; but as vanity was the characteristic of the early world, and as pride has been developed by the diffusion of mankind into regions less easily habitable, it follows that reason has been increasing, while imagination has every day been losing the influence which it once had in ruling the concerns of men, and that even where it still exercises its seductions, it is now controlled and dignified by the noblest faculty of the human mind. The great and striking difference which marks the intellectual condition of the earliest and the latest nations, and which characterises the two leading eras of civilisation, is that the former abounded in imagination, the latter in reason.

That such will continue to be the march of intellect, cannot well be doubted. It is not, indeed, to be expected that where natural circumstances have guaranteed easy prosperity, imagination will soon resign its place to reason, or that men will uncompelled turn aside from the luxury of thought to embrace its austerity. The regions likely to continue vain, as those inhabited by all the oriental nations, will continue imaginative, and, in a less degree, the south of Europe will differ from the north in reason; but America will bring a large addition to this treasure of the understanding, for as it was before observed, although that continent has many motives to be vain, yet its vanity will be more like that of Europe than of Asia; and so, too, will be its intellect. The mind of the United States has already shown itself active and energetic, and, in the present condition of things, more philosophic than sportive. Many causes will long give their literature the same characteristics as that of Eng-

land wears. It must be remembered that, though literary productions must be acceptable to the public for whom they are destined, that public, even in the most enlightened nations, is confined ; and the tribunal to which authors appeal is not composed of two persons in a hundred of the total population. Hence the voice of the nation is less consulted upon its poetry—still less upon its science—than upon most of its concerns, and its literary character is determined by an exclusive coterie, into which patriotism, wealth, or civic virtues cannot gain admission. Hence, then, America may be at variance with England in trade, politics, and industry, yet her men of taste and genius may still find their literary antiquity in the great productions of the mother country.

The southern empires of that continent are more in a situation to be imaginative, neither do they possess recollections which might give them the most constant reflection ; but, should they not exceed their progenitors in the proportion which fancy and philosophy bear to reason, they will still be ranked among rational, not among imaginative nations. To ascertain what America might have been in this as in other respects, had Europeans never disturbed her natural progress, the qualities of her soil, climate, and geographical situation must be consulted ; but, in the present circumstances, it is undoubted that all the European characteristics will be propagated there, and that this new world, unlike Asia and Africa, will bring a mighty addition to the happiness, the dignity, and the value of human intellect\*.

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\* See Note D, at the end of the Volume.

## PART III.

## On the Reaction of the different Modifications of Intellect upon the Characters of Nations.

As intellect is the moderator of every human institution, its reaction upon the characters of nations becomes of the highest importance.

The earliest faculties developed are the perceptive. Any superiority which the earliest men can claim over the latest, must be in the department which depends upon the first developed faculties, while in those which are called into action at a more advanced period, the present generations must have juster pretensions. In proportion as reason is superior to perception, the condition of the moderns must be preferable.

The excellence of the ancients was in poetry, in sculpture, and in painting, and their deficiency lay in philosophy. Their painting, we are told, was admirably expressive, but as this praise was bestowed by men whose notions of sentiment and of expression are unmeasured by us, we cannot duly interpret their eulogium. Of their sculpture, more monuments have braved the inclemency of time, and in this art they stand unrivalled. Modern ages have produced hardly any specimens of it, and a long chasm interrupted its march; yet more passion, more of the philosophy of the soul is displayed in a single production of the nineteenth century, than is generally to be met with in the statues of the ancients. The Venuses which fill the palaces of Italy are varied models of ideal grace and beauty—the Herculeases are admirable images of strength, almost divine—Apollo seems to move and breathe a god; but the group of Laocoon alone can be compared with the Magdalen of Canova, for fable, life, and passion—yet the Magdalen is but a single figure.

But a juster comparison may be made between the poetry of the two epochas. Numerous specimens remain, and of the greatest masters; nay, the poet who, after three thousand years, is still the prince of the epopœa, exists to prove

that though, in many points, he never has been equalled, he has, in later times, found superiors in all that relates to the philosophy of the heart.

The Grecian bard drew his principal imagery from the material world. His comparisons and illustrations are found in such things as the most uncultivated men perceive every day, but which his genius warmed into poetry. The Greek tragedians penetrated a little deeper into the human heart: but they were far from reaching the variety of pathos which moderns have attained. The lyric poetry, of that nation, too,—however inspired as in Pindar,—however voluptuous as in Anacreon,—wanted much of that philosophy which Horace knew how to confer upon it: and, if the Roman tragedians were inferior to their predecessors, it was because the stoicism of the nation—the state of concentration in which they held their passions, was not favorable to the expression of sorrow. The songs of the inspired Hebrews are full of the vigour and freshness of a youthful muse; but they want the maturity which gives, on the one hand, manliness, on the other sensibility and softness. The moral imagery of Dante is more profound and varied than that of his predecessors; and the poets of Italy and of Spain generally abound in sentiments which never had been awakened among the Greeks. Even the least poetic of nations, the most servile imitators of antiquity, have occasionally ventured upon the expression of feelings of which there was no prototype in their originals; and love, in the *Phèdre* of Racine, notwithstanding the gallantry which disfigures it, is more delicate and varied than any to be found upon the Greek stage. As to English poetry, it is the most enlarged of all, because the nation is the most philosophic. There is not a passion incident to human nature which has not been painted, in an infinity of shapes and relations, by the bards of Britain.

But poetry is the only domain of mind in which the ancients can claim a superiority. In every thing which moves by reason, they are inferior. There is not a science, moral or physical, which, however sketched out by them, has not been increased and developed a thousand fold; and

many now flourish of which they had no conception. The knowledge which they possessed in mathematics is at present taught to children—who, at their very first entrance into the study, learn the truth for the discovery of which Pythagoras offered a hecatomb to the gods. The system of the world, perceived by the same great philosopher, but reviled by his cotemporaries, is now demonstrated ; and, in the predictions of astronomy, an error of a second of time in twelve months, or of one part in three millions, would be unpardonable. The discoveries which have been made in physics place the moderns at an immeasurable distance before the ancients. Chemistry is a new science. Natural history has been as much extended as the knowledge of the regions where the productions of the animal, of the vegetable, and of the mineral kingdoms are found. Medicine, surgery, anatomy, have kept equal pace with the rest ; and reason has thrown its steady light on every spot which imagination once peopled with fantastic spectres.

But the superiority of modern civilisation is still greater in the philosophy of the mind and heart. The Greeks knew as much as it was possible to know of man at their epocha. But man himself was not developed in the days of Socrates and Plato. His intellect was but half awakened—his soul was but half expanded. He wanted the stimulant of necessity to make him feel all the resources of his ingenuity—all the powers of his nature ; and he was waiting till more complicated relations of social intercourse had given him warmer affections.

Two men who have often been compared, as having rendered more general service to philosophy than any others, are Aristotle and Bacon. Without presuming to decide which of the two possessed the largest mind, it may fairly be said that Bacon belonged to a much more advanced condition of the understanding ; and that his knowledge and studies bore the characteristics of a world matured by two thousand years of labour and reflection. In physical philosophy, Aristotle may have done proportionally more ; but in the moral, and, still more, in the intellectual sciences, the modern was far superior. Antiquity did, perhaps, produce

more than one man of equal genius with Locke ; but what it could not have done, was to place a philosopher upon the same vantage ground as that on which the modern stood, and to give him materials for such advanced speculations. The same may be said of many great and learned men who have flourished in the Christian era ; and Spain, Italy, and France—but still more Germany and England—can boast of a state of knowledge, and of a diffusion of philosophy, superior to anything existing before the fall of Rome.

That imagination contributes much to the pleasures and enjoyments of life, cannot be doubted. It is the magic spirit which strews it with flowers ; which marshals the way to intellect, and is the bright precursor of all advancement. Without it, the world would be a dreary waste, and the green field would never rise up to our hopes in the midst of snows. But its creations are exposed to error ; and it may as often conceal as discover truth. Reason, on the contrary, does not procure such splendid pleasures, but it makes life solid. If Pindar, swept along by the ecstasies of fancy as he touched the pliant strings of his lyre, felt all the rapid delights of inspiration, what was not the gratification of Newton when, by slow approaches and long perseverance, he had ascertained the system of the universe.

It was by a greater mixture of the reflecting faculties than had yet been the lot of nations, that the Greeks rose so superior to their predecessors. Yet that their intellect was not as mature and rigid as it might have been, even in those early times, the great advances which the Romans made very soon afterwards, sufficiently prove. Were the literature only of the two countries to be examined, this might not be so evident ; but the entire state of both show it beyond a doubt. It is in the philosophy of the two people, theoretic and still more practical, that the superior reason of the Romans appears ; in the reflection and prudence with which they conducted their affairs of state, and the concerns of social intercourse, as of private life. Every motion of the Athenians was communicated by enthusiasm—by imagination, heated by passion. Unsteady in their dearest interests, swayed by the impulse of the moment, which generally was

pleasure, their government was a succession of factions; their religion was without piety; their policy was glory; their relations with mankind were circumscribed, and the first limits of their territory were the last. Their power, great in Greece, was little in the world; and no conquest like those which the Romans made distinguishes their annals. The intellectual quality by which they were the most distinguished was taste; the lively perception and the sensibility which feel the beauties of nature, and of the art which can copy her with truth.

But the Romans were superior in greater things than the perception of beauty; and their bequests to posterity are of more value than graceful marble, or than shaded canvass—than the *Iliad*—nay, even than the orations of Demosthenes, or the philosophy of Plato.

Let it be admitted that the first founders of Rome were ruffians and spoilers; that their early conquests were the results of violence; and that all their proceedings were iniquitous: still it cannot be denied that their actions were dictated by much policy. Such a handful of invaders as attended Romulus must have been crushed immediately, if force had been their only weapon. The resource of the few against the numerous, is intellect. It was thus that Mahomet converted all the East; that Cortez conquered all the West; and thus did the whole globe become tributary to Rome. It was not her numbers, but her organised valour, which made her superior to all the nations of Italy. It was her wiser civilisation, and her greater political prudence, which enabled her to retain possession of every spot which she conquered, and to incorporate all within her own dominions. It was reason which made her, during seven hundred years, the greatest, the most virtuous of nations; and the impulse given by reason continued to leave her the mistress of the world, long after vice and folly had overthrown the qualities on which her ancient greatness was founded.

In the same manner, among modern empires, England has performed the hardest task, and accomplished the greatest ends. It would be difficult to name any province of intel-



lect which has not been cultivated by her with better success than by any other people, ancient or modern.

Whatever be the wisdom which the Romans displayed in retaining their conquests, the British have evinced still more policy in educating and fostering their colonies and dependencies. Among the many countries tributary to Rome, which of them, as extensive as the United States of America, ever was taught such independence, and such liberty, in so short a time? What districts of Asia, separated from the mother-country by half the circumference of the globe, and peopled by five times as many millions as herself, did she govern with such moderation and such justice, that a single Briton is sufficient to maintain peace among two thousand natives? Where did she ever dare incorporate, and arm, and discipline indigenous troops, as England does in India, ten times as numerous as her own? Did Rome ever see ninety millions of men growing up to liberty, to independence, under her tuition, and trained to nobler ends of intellect and morals than their natural situation could have taught them? Or, if she did behold so stupendous a sight, had she, at the same time, under her fostering care, another empire, almost antipodal, and larger than Europe? Had she, in every latitude, on every shore, wise and bold adventurers, who, by a happy union of general and private interest, were daily spreading her power, and magnifying her wealth, by the blessed arts of peace? All this she does, too, not by force or by intrigue, but by the very means which were given to man to constitute him the lord of the earth, the master of everything that breathes; and which can make one thinking being more powerful than twenty tigers; by the mighty spirit and the mighty mind which find resources greater than strength and craftiness, and can accomplish more than nerve or cunning can defeat.

Though history records no such weak beginnings to the power of England as of Rome, yet the achievements of the former were infinitely more arduous. The first settlement and the first conquests of the Romans were their most difficult task; for success made every succeeding effort more easy. But England cannot have the same expansibility as

a continental state. Her colonies can furnish her no armies for new conquests ; and every increase of dominion renders a subsequent increase less probable. Thus the Romans proceeded from difficulty to ease, while the English went from one difficulty to another still greater ; and it is more wonderful to see the Indian empire in their hands, than to see a Roman army in Carthage, Gaul, or Britain.

A strong contrast to England in this respect is France. The territory of that kingdom is about twice as extensive as the British islands. It is more fertile by nature, and its climate should add about one-fourth to its constant productiveness. Yet what is the first result which strikes the observer ? Its population is but as three to two, or nearly one-fourth less than it ought to be, in proportion to its extent alone. But the climate should add one fourth to the alimental qualities of the soil, and its population ought to be nine, whereas it is but six. Consequently the deficiency is one third ; and an inferiority may fairly be deduced against France in that ratio. It would be unfair to deduce a similar inferiority of England to Ireland, since the extraordinary population of the latter is owing to many unfortunate circumstances.

But France has, in fact, one-third more of inhabitants than Britain ; and she has more than double her natural means of strength. She should then do at least one-third more than England. But she is infinitely far from having done so. No nation, with such capabilities, and so studious of her own advantage, has achieved so little for the general good of mankind, as she has done. If a day should come when nations must render up an account of the use which they made of the means that Nature had confided to them, to what deserts, once unpeopled, could France appeal, to prove that the men who inhabit them are her children ? On what shores, once heathen, could she say that Christian prayers are uttered in her tongue ? Amid what people could she find a monument inscribed with her language, to show that she had increased the number of beings who share the blessings of this world, and multiplied the generations destined to be eternally happy ? Where the children of

England dwell, and where her language is spoken, the sun never sets. Spain has given all she had—her laws, her courage, and her generous character, to South America. Portugal, a province of the heroic peninsula, has founded empires many times as large. Venice, Florence, Genoa, too, may urge their disproportioned claim as contributors to the prosperity of one of the most important habitations of man. But the curse of sterility weighs upon France; and, when she falls, she will leave no progeny to whom, in her decline, she may bequeath whatever she possessed of renown and enjoyment.

The epochas called ages are among the strongest intellectual characteristics of vain nations, whom contrasts please more than uniformity, and to whom a brilliant epocha which dazzles, is more precious than a larger portion of prosperity, diffused through a longer period. It was in her vainest era that Athens had her age of Pericles. It was in the decline of her pride, that Rome had her Augustan age. The Medici gave their name to the time which owed its splendour principally to them. The French had their age of Louis XIV. But the Spaniards never thought of particularising any single era; neither have the Germans marked any epocha by such an epithet. As little did the proud and philosophic English bestow the name on any of the splendid years which have adorned their history; but, satisfied with the even tenor of their greatness, they have not affixed a dazzling celebrity to any single epocha.

However brilliant these specks of time may appear, however they may serve as beacons in the adventurous course of human progress, their real value has been much overrated; for their advantages are overbalanced by two material defects:—First, the nations which have admitted them have not known the same constant progress as those in which they have not been remarked. Secondly, these epochas themselves have always been disastrous periods, if not for the world at large, at least for the states in which they were acknowledged.

The age of Pericles was replete with genius, but also with depravity; as he himself was a compound of the most

opposite qualities. Everything which could contribute to the glory and splendour of Athens he encouraged ; but he favored all that could corrupt his fellow-citizens, and serve to establish his own power and tyranny. In vain did he boast upon his death-bed, that no Athenian had ever put on mourning through his misconduct. He did worse than give them cause to mourn ; he fathomed every defect which they had, and turned it to its most pernicious account. The fine arts which he protected were a sad compensation for the liberty of which he deprived them ; and the pleasures of poetry and painting were feeble substitutes for political rights. Better had it been for his country had he left the fabric of her constitution untouched, and not adorned his native city with the immortal Parthenon. Better had it been that he had allowed the Athenian women to remain in ignorance and subjection, than introduced the harlotry of Asia, and protected the wit and depravity of Aspasia. The age of Pericles was the season in which the seeds of every vice, that afterwards caused the ruin of Athens, were sown ; and they never ceased to increase and multiply.

The age of Augustus shed similar glories and similar disasters on Rome. Although this emperor but little resembled Pericles, both pursued the same line of conduct : they lulled their subjects into indifference upon every great theme, by turning their attention to the pleasures of the senses, to games, festivals, and dissipation ; to the seducing arts of poetry, painting, and sculpture ; to the licentiousness of military glory ; to all that can make men submissive subjects and useful soldiers to an ambitious master : in a word, they took advantage of every evil inclination which too easy prosperity had implanted in the minds of the southern nations whom they governed.

In the same manner, though in a less degree, the Medici, Cosmo and Lorenzo, diminished the liberty of the Florentines, while they encouraged literature, science, and the arts ; and, while their own countrymen are indebted to them for the pre-eminence which their city still maintains, the modern world owes to them much of the impulse which has directed it towards the noblest pursuits.

These three ages, but particularly the two former, may have some claim to general celebrity, because their influence was felt by all that were then capable of intellectual progress, and it still continues to be acknowledged. Athens was the eye and the light of Greece. Greece was the beacon of all known nations. The most brilliant period of that city may then be hailed as an epocha among men, and living empires still may venerate it. Even better-founded rights has the Augustan age to be remembered. The splendour of the imperial capital was the splendour of the whole human race; for all the world was hers. Rome could not be great, and Europe not feel it, and Africa and Asia not be improved by the strength of her mind. The nations which now are civilised have not forgotten the days of her omnipotence; and the spirit of her departed power is still present among them. The small republic of Florence did not, indeed, exercise such political authority, but its ascendancy was great over the revival of letters; and modern arts and sciences own the Florentine age as their parent. But the age of Louis XIV. cannot belong to the world at large. It gave much glory to France; but even that glory was soon effaced by defeat, and not a single act was done for the good of the species. In internal policy the nation lost much, for the monarch, always too powerful, became the most absolute of Christian princes. Neither had he any of the great qualities which can stamp an age as his own. One spark of royal inspiration he had, indeed—ambition; but even that was deficient in grandeur. He was not either a statesman, a general, or a hero: his best qualification was, that he was the proper head of a frivolous and depraved court, plunged in refined immorality, and where adulation called him great. No deeds can give their name to an age if they are merely national. To belong to the world, they must benefit the world.

If the disposition of England were to boast, how many epochas might she not signalise, as far superior to the age of vanity, as Shakspeare is to every dramatist of France! She might begin with Alfred, and call his age the age of policy;—she might tell the reigns that laid the foundation of

the freedom which, at this moment, is the model of the world ;—she might point out the days of Elizabeth, of which the glory was greater, the advantage more solid, and the degradation less, than of the age of Louis XIV. ;—she might name contemporaries of this great princess, men who did not merely imbibe, but who created knowledge ; who did not repeat the strains of the ancient muses, but who discovered new poetry ; who did not run round and round a trite and beaten circle, but who enlarged the sphere of the mind with new ideas ;—she might have shown Shakspeare, towering above the human soul, and who, if man had not existed, would—if the expression be tolerated—have invented him ; and Bacon, the lord of the understanding, the discoverer of the means of science, whose thought was directed to all space and time ;—she might have shown the correction of religious extravagances, ushering in the correction of political abuses ; the study of the law become general ; the globe explored in all directions, and new regions taken under her care ;—she might pass on to the reigns of the Stuarts, and hear her parliaments discussing greater themes than were dreamt of in the schools of antiquity. In the age of Queen Anne, she might boast of the issue of her wise perseverance, and name her statesmen, her warriors, her poets, her philosophers, her Newton, her Locke, and her Chatham ; a mass of men far superior to those of Louis XIV. From her whole history she might bring proofs that her mind does not know the alternations of dark and lucid intervals, of flashes in eternal night ; but that it is constantly luminous and constantly busied. If the shade of Louis XIV. were to appear, surrounded by all the worthies of his reign, how much more illustrious would be the crowd of British immortals who would throng round the shade of her two last monarchs ? Yet, though she might bestow upon the reign of George III. all the praise which Louis did deserve, and all which he did not deserve, she does not affix his name to that era. His was an age of more solid good at home, of more benevolence abroad ; of more morality, more thought, more genius, and more enterprise. Its blessings were felt by more distant men, and



more numerous nations ; and it raised the whole human race to a more exalted station than any epocha had ever done before.

In nothing is the contrast of the English and French character so complete as in the general result produced by the reaction of reason and of imagination. While England has been overcoming the greatest difficulties, and has attained the greatest ends from the smallest beginnings, France is the nation that, in proportion to her means, has contributed the least to promote the general progress of the species.

It was not till the end of the last century that the French perceived the deficiency of their political system ; but they had performed many exploits in literature long before that time. They had an academy of science before they thought of legislative bodies ; and they had observed the heavens, and attempted to analyse the elements, before the Encyclopedists, shallow, visionary, and impious as they were, began to call their attention to the nature of man and of society. In England, on the contrary, man in his political relations was the first subject of study ; after which came poetry, the sciences, the arts ; and not one of them engaged attention, until the branches which should naturally precede had been fully investigated.

Nothing is more different than the ratio which science bears to general instruction in the two countries. In France, the disparity between the learned and the unlearned is extreme. In England, plain, homely instruction is more common, and more knowledge is diffused through society. A shorter interval then divides the two conditions. In Italy and Spain, where learning is not so common, the sciences are far from being on a brilliant footing ; and no *éclat* induces a belief that those nations are learned. Neither is a condition of intellect, similar to that which is found in France, uncommon in vain nations. The Arabs, who, for the most part, were slaves, plunderers, and banditti, without a tincture of morality, or any knowledge of the soul, highly honored the works of imagination. But the hundred poets who accompanied the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid, in his pilgrimage to Mecca, did less to civilise and enlighten their countrymen



than an equal number of British legislators; though the hundred poets would have formed a more brilliant assembly. A source of many evils during the revolution of France was, that her learned men imagined they could master human passions as easily as they could rake out the ashes of their Athanor; or govern the loosened winds of the cavern of Eolus, with as much facility as they could calculate their velocity.

Next to England, in the generality of knowledge, stand the northern Germans, whose pride informs them that one thousand persons of moderate instruction form a better, a wiser, and a happier community, than nine hundred and ninety-nine ignorant, and one discoverer. Nay more, that among one thousand persons of moderate general instruction, there may be more useful discoveries, than among ten or twenty, or twice twenty of the deeply learned.

The modern nations that have the most successfully cultivated the fine arts, are not those whose political institutions are the most admirable. Those arts, however, are sources of infinite gratification, and belong to a very high state of social improvement. But where they are set above their real value, and held as the worthiest pursuits, it becomes necessary to the interests of mankind that they should be reduced to their proper estimation.

The most complete condition of polity can exist without pictures or statues, and men are made more happy by the enjoyment of their privileges, than by any of the flowers of fancy. The political sciences, however, are considered as the mere drudgery of homely life, and where they are the most cultivated they pass unnoticed by ordinary minds. The Apollo Belvedere is known to many thousands more than are acquainted with the thirty-ninth article of the British Magna Charta; yet that article has done more real good to the world than all that ever grew under the magic hand of Phidias and Praxiteles. The law which prohibits the punishment of any man illegally appears quite simple to enlightened minds—to barbarians it would be unintelligible; therefore, neither are amazed at it. But both ignorance and learning admire the palpable image of man, produced by human hands.

The fine arts have sometimes been used by insidious politicians, as the means of lulling the sensibility of nations whom they would luxuriously charm into slavery. It was in this intention that Pericles so much encouraged the predilection of the Athenians for refinement, and that Augustus pursued a similar method with the Romans. Louis XIV. possessed still ampler means to persuade his subjects that, under him, they were the first of human beings. Since the superiority of the Romans, many new departments of thought had been explored, and all of these he united as the means of deception. One only study he forbade—the study of human nature, of the rights of the governed. Happy is it for despots when they find means to divert the minds of those whom they would enslave, from moral and political speculations, into some less dangerous channels, and give more harmless vents to the curiosity which cannot be repressed! The most effectual, but the most treacherous arms for this purpose are those which the highest faculties can furnish; and these this monarch employed to dazzle his people and the world into a belief that his nation was what, for his diadem, he would not that it had been—the most enlightened of Europe; but the opinion was sufficient for glory, and glory was sufficient for his happiness. The most extraordinary thing concerning this age is, that a period from which all political knowledge was proscribed—nay, in which it was counted treason—should ever have been called Great.

One of the intellectual characteristics which the French have much increased by the recollection of this age, is the propensity to convert small objects into great—to fill their minds with trifles, and make them the serious occupations of their lives. Thus it is, that a due and harmonising proportion is wanting to them—the faculties which they employ are ill adjusted to the objects which they consider—and, while they are great in trifles, they remain, generally, little in what is great.

The English, like all proud nations  
superiority to nothing so much  
subsists between the fact

objects which they consider. The preference which they show to the moral over the physical sciences—the priority which political discussions had of natural philosophy, astronomy, &c., the greater importance in which they still are held, are proofs that every branch of knowledge was esteemed in proportion to its just merits—and firmly presaged that, in all of them, the British would have precedency over all who pretend to be their rivals.

An epocha is now begun, in which the human mind has taken wing towards a nobler flight than it ever attempted before, and the change which it promises forebodes the greatest consequences. The diffusion of knowledge among men of every rank is now becoming so general, that, in half a century, the lowest classes of society will contain a larger proportion of men who will be able to reason soundly, than, four centuries ago, could have been reckoned in the highest; and modern cottages will soon be better instructed than feudal castles ever were.

Yet there are who view this dissemination of instruction with apprehension, and suppose that it will turn the minds of artisans and labourers from their necessary employments. Neither does a comparison between the happiness and misery, the morality and the vice of the instructed and the uninstructed districts at home and abroad—a comparison so much in favor of the former—destroy the prejudice.

The inconveniences of all that is new are sometimes the first effects that are felt, and the most powerful instruments are those which must be used with the greatest skill. That the novelty of instruction may give some inexperienced minds exaggerated notions of their own importance, can easily be imagined; but a habit of knowledge will dispel these effects. In the dead of night men grope about as they can, and avoid danger by chance or by dexterity. When a sudden day appears they are almost blinded by it, but the hour of noon shows everything as it is.

But let it be supposed that insurrection and idleness were the themes inculcated to-day, would not the hunger of to-morrow correct them? Let the husbandman throw away his plough—let the weaver throw away his loom—the shoemaker his

last—would not the ills which these men would immediately experience force them back to their occupations? If imagination were to triumph for a time, and folly to usurp the place of truth, the drudgery of life in these necessitous regions would soon bring back reason. Practice has shown that equality is a vision, and indefinite liberty the worst of tyrannies, and sound instruction, which is but the record of practice, will teach men to avoid them. The result of education to the poor will be, to teach them that there are moral hardships in this world, his share in which it is the duty of every man to endure.

But history can prove that the diffusion of instruction never was detrimental, except when confined to a few. When the monks alone were in possession of learning, the church was full of abuses—religion was made an instrument of temporal authority, and priestcraft usurped every power; but when knowledge began to peer without the walls of the cloister, a general reform ensued. In popular excesses, the active participators always are the most ignorant of men, who, dupes to the sophistry of artful incendiaries, obey their summons, because they have no arguments to oppose against them. Unless knowledge be error, its diffusion must lead to good order and happiness; and it is dangerous only when it enables the learned few to lead and to mislead the ignorance of multitudes.

As there are men whose constitution for ever fixes them below the common standard of intellect, while others are destined to rise above it, so nations are susceptible of education only according to their previous dispositions. The proud will consider instruction as power—the vain as amusement, and the former will soon reach a greater distance before all competitors than they had ever known. The qualities of intellect must continue as long as their first causes operate, and each nation will derive from the propagation of knowledge, advantages as distinct and peculiar, as those already received from all the other sources of improvement which have been within the reach of man.

It is only by the progress of reason and the dissemination of knowledge that men can become capable of living under

the mildest restraints of law, and they who have the good of the world at heart must hope to see it advance by one steady and equable motion. Let it ever be remembered, 1st, That universal ignorance is barbarity : 2nd, That the learning of the few is despotism, if used to abase the people, and anarchy, if used to raise them higher than they ought to ascend ;—that the few seldom employ their learning but to one of these ends, when their inferiors are ignorant ; and, finally, that the learning of the multitude is liberty.

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## N O T E S.

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### NOTE A.—*Referred to in page 192.*

THE atrocities committed under the early monarchs, as Clovis, who murdered eight of his own relations, and was one of the least cruel among them, as Clotaire, Fredegonde, Brunehaut, Chilperic, Clotaire II., are not equalled in the analogous periods of any other country; and, though the people might not be so much the prey of the tyrant as in Persia, contentions, treacheries, and murders were more frequent among the princes of the royal blood. The monarchs who succeeded Clotaire II. were less sanguinary, but, according to historians, their gentleness so little suited the taste of the times, that they were dethroned. During a famine which raged in 1031, human flesh was devoured—a butcher at Tournus exposed it for sale in his shambles; and, near Maçon, one man was detected who had murdered forty-eight persons in the same intention. In the punishment which Louis VI. inflicted upon the Flemish, the mayor of Bruges, after having his eyes, nose, and arms lacerated, was fixed to a wheel, and a thousand arrows shot slowly into his body, in order to protract his sufferings. Another magistrate was tied to a post, with a dog fastened to his head, who was beaten to madness, to make him more furious; the other accomplices were precipitated from a tower. Louis VII. purposely burned thirteen hundred persons in a church at Vitry, in Champagne, and historians call the act ‘un emportement de jeunesse.’ The cruelties of the Cotteaux, under Philip II., were excessive. They flayed priests alive, ravished women before their husbands’ faces, pillaged churches, and laid the country waste. Their punishment was equally cruel. Shortly afterwards the Routiers appeared, who were equally cruel, and twenty-six thousand of them were slain by the Chaperous. These soon became worse than those whom they had defeated. The laws enacted by Philip II. were inhuman. Assassins were condemned to be tied to the body of the murdered persons, and thus buried alive. Robbers were shaved, and tar and feathers poured upon their heads. Philip put to death more than eighty Jews, on pretence that they had crucified a Christian child. At the siege of Chateau Gaillard, in 1203, the besieged sat watching for the delivery of a pregnant woman, and devoured her child the instant it was born. In a crusade against the Albigenses, Beziers was taken; sixty thousand inhabitants were, without distinction of

age, sex, or religion, cut to atoms, among whom seven thousand in a church. Simon de Montford, whose humanity the Père Daniel thinks he cannot sufficiently eulogise, after taking Lavaur, threw the lady of the castle alive into a well, hanged her brother, murdered eighty gentlemen, her companions, and burned four heretics, while the clergy were singing a hymn to the Holy Ghost. Foulques, bishop of Toulouse, committed the most deplorable excesses in the town, which was at length taken by Montford, burned, and the inhabitants massacred. Amauri de Montford murdered five thousand prisoners, uselessly, and in cold blood, at Marmande. In the reign of Louis VIII. many persons were attacked with leprosy. They were at first taken care of in establishments endowed for the purpose; but their sufferings wearied out the benevolence of the nation, and, upon the ridiculous pretence that they had poisoned the springs and rivers of the country, Philip V. had the greatest number of them burned. Nothing, says Velly, can equal the ravages committed in Champagne and Brie, by and against Thiebaut, Count of Champagne, in the time of Louis IX. The affairs of Languedoc are thus described: Various conflicts took place between Raymond, Count of Toulouse, and Beaujeu. The latter took many towns, put the inhabitants to the edge of the sword, murdered them with bludgeons, or roasted them as heretics at slow fires. Raymond, in reprisal, thus treated three thousand five hundred prisoners he had in his possession:—he cut off their noses, their ears, a hand, or a foot, or plucked out an eye of each, and thus had them carried back to the enemy. Velly adds, Raymond was fortunate enough to repeat this treatment three times in one campaign. The mode of carrying on the war was, to destroy every house, to lay waste every field, to root up every tree—‘a prudent measure,’ says another historian, ‘and which took away from the pampered heretics the food of their obstinate pride.’ When Raymond was converted, he manifested equal zeal against his former party, eighty of whom he burned at Agen. The Pastoureaux, who began, it is true, in Flanders, amounted to near one hundred thousand in France, and were not much less destructive than the Cottereaux and the Routiers. The French troops in Italy, under Charles d’Anjou, committed dreadful cruelties, particularly at Benevento, where a dreadful massacre took place. The first Christian sovereign brought to the scaffold by a Christian sovereign, was Conradin of Naples, murdered by Charles d’Anjou, and with the most horrible circumstances. Charles, the brother of St. Louis, had usurped the throne of the Italian prince, and held him in his power, together with his cousin and ally, Frederic, Duke of Austria. He had them both condemned to death by a tribunal of his new subjects, along with the chiefs of their party. Before their execution he had them conducted to a church hung with black, where they were compelled to hear their own funeral service, and prayers offered up for their souls. Fre-



deric was young, but Conradin was not seventeen years of age. Their bodies were left without burial, and their death was followed by near one thousand executions ordered by the French usurper. The cruelty of the French in Sicily was among the crimes which caused the massacre of twenty-eight thousand Frenchmen there, known by the name of Sicilian Vespers. Charles de Valois, brother of Philip IV., hung eighty prisoners, out of mere cruelty. Two lovers of the daughters of Philip IV. were flayed alive, then dragged through a stubble-field, mutilated, beheaded, and hanged to a gibbet under the arms. The persons who had assisted in carrying on their intrigue, and among the number was a bishop, were either drowned or smothered. Under the same king, Hainault was laid waste, and the reprisals were so dreadful that, Velly says, one would have supposed that hordes of Tartars had combined to ruin Europe. Enguerrand de Marigny was unjustly put to death by Louis X.; as, under Charles IV., was another financier, whose body was dragged through the streets of Paris; and under Philip VI. another tied to a horse's tail. About the same time, Jourdain de Lille, a famous feudal predatory chief, committed dreadful cruelties, and was cruelly punished. Beside many massacres and cruelties committed in the Flemish wars, under Philip VI., the chiefs of the revolt were condemned to death, and ten thousand of them were executed. This, says Velly, quietly, took up three months, but in his recital of it it takes up three lines. The French besieging Thynne l'Evêque, threw dead bodies into the town to corrupt the air. A massacre of Jews took place in Paris, accused of having caused an epidemic which raged there. A massacre was committed, by order of Craon, at La Roche Derrien. Among the number, two hundred and fifty English were slaughtered, contrary to stipulation, by the populace. Under John, Raoul d'Eu was beheaded, with circumstances of peculiar perfidy. Aimerie de Pavie was torn to pieces by horses, by order of Charny, whom Edward had once spared for a similar offence. The crimes of Charles de Navarre begin by the murder of Charles d'Espagne. John, by whose order Raoul d'Eu had been beheaded, went to Rouen, to be present at a festival given by the Dauphin. He ordered the arrest of several persons present there, then sat down to supper, and, having eaten and drunk most heartily, ordered the prisoners to be put in a cart, and accompanied them himself to the place of execution, where they were beheaded in his presence. This was the king whom the French have surnamed the Good. It was during the captivity of this monarch, while the government was weakened by his absence, that the people of France had more scope to show their real disposition; and acts were perpetrated by them which, for their number, their atrocity, the fury and duration of the passion which dictated them, have no parallel in the history of civilised and Christian nations. It is upon these most particularly

that the character of cruelty is here attributed to the French nation, and they deserve peculiar attention.

Byt he intercession of Charles the Bad, king of Navarre, cousin to John, all the 'thieves, murderers, highwaymen, coiners, 'forgers, assassins, sorcerers, poisoners, all men guilty of rape, all 'ravishers of women, all disturbers of the public peace,' were set at liberty, and these, which amounted to a prodigious number, he made the instruments of his crimes; but, independently of them, the populace, under the conduct of Marcel, was most ferocious. Several murders were committed, and the Dauphin was covered with the blood of two of his faithful adherents, slain in his presence, and whose bodies were insulted by the populace, during the whole day. The 'Companies,' composed of the disbanded armies of John, joined by all that was bad in France, were at the same time committing still greater ravages in the provinces. Out of all this arose the Jacquerie, a thousandth part of whose crimes it is impossible to relate. The Jacques, harassed by the murders and devastations committed all around them, flew to arms, to exterminate the nobles and all the peasantry who refused to join them. Upwards of two hundred castles were burned, and the inhabitants massacred. A scene which took place in one of these may serve as a picture of all. The proprietor was tied to a post; his wife and daughter were violated in his presence; he was spitted, roasted, and his family were compelled to eat of him; the whole was then committed to the flames. The Jacques who were thus employed, amounted to one hundred thousand, and when asked why they acted thus, they answered that they knew not, but that, seeing others do so, they did the same. At last the nobles united against them, and they were exterminated, but not before every corner of France had been deluged with blood, or made the prey of incendiaries. Seven thousand were slaughtered in one day at Meaux. Some French historians accuse the English of participating in these massacres, but without the least proof or foundation. The English did nothing but in open war, which, on both sides indeed, was sufficiently sanguinary, but they took no part in the wanton cruelties and massacres. These were entirely the work of the French among themselves; and that they wanted no assistance to be cruel, may be learned from their conduct at other epochas, when no foreigners were in the kingdom. When Marcel was killed, his body, with several others, was dragged through the streets by the very populace they had but the day before headed. His accomplices were tortured, the town given up to pillage, and private vengeance satisfied. The 'Companies' continued their massacres, and were succeeded by the Tard-venus, a little less cruel, because less numerous. French historians, indeed, say that the former were more destructive than the wars with the English. They committed dreadful massacres at Pont l'Esprit. Twenty-nine partisans of Charles the Bad, taken at Mantes, after much carnage,

were beheaded in Paris. Du Guesclin, one of the heroes of French honor, was a leader of the 'Companies,' and as much addicted to pillage as the meanest among them. At Valognes the English surrendered to him by capitulation; 'but,' says Velly, 'the French insulted them as they passed, and loaded them with the bitterest reproaches.' Eight English knights escaped back to the tower, defended themselves there, and, being taken, were inhumanly beheaded by Du Guesclin. Clisson, surnamed the Butcher, with his own hand, split the skulls of fifteen English prisoners at Benon, as they came out of the tower, one by one. Many other English were hanged, on pretence of reprisals. The Duke d'Anjou, at the instigation of Clisson, murdered some English hostages; the English retaliated by murdering four prisoners. The people at Marseilles rose against the tax-gatherers, and in their undistinguishing fury murdered eighty persons, threw them into the wells, and Charles d'Anjou punished them by various humiliations, and condemned two hundred of the insurgents to die by the axe, two hundred by fire, and two hundred to be hanged, but this punishment was in part remitted. Aubriot, one of the most respectable magistrates that Paris ever saw, was most unjustly sacrificed to the resentment of the university. During the insurrections and massacres in Rouen and Paris on account of taxes, many persons were cruelly murdered, and the guilty were punished by being thrown into the river at night, when the tumult was appeased. The French, victorious in Flanders, and about to return home, massacred the inhabitants of Courtray in the most cruel manner, exasperated, as some historians say, at seeing their gilt spurs, taken by the Flemish, eighty years before, hung up in the church. Dreadful punishments were inflicted by the king in Paris; the prisons were full, and many killed themselves, to avoid a more painful death. Three hundred persons are said to have been victims to this persecution. The advocate-general, Jean Desmarets, a very eminent and virtuous man, was of the number. At length the executions became so numerous, that prisoners were tied up in sacks, and thrown into the river at night. In the midst of all this, Lusignan, king of Armenia, was well received in France. 'A generous feeling of hospitality, of compassion, of benevolence,' says the respectable Velly, 'always was the virtue of our princes' and of our nation.' In 1353, a revolt, followed by cruel executions at Beziers, was the prelude of much worse in Auvergne and Poitou. The peasants rose against the nobles, and massacred every man whose hands were not hard with labour, laying waste the whole country through which they passed. The Duke de Berri marched against them, and they were all cut to pieces or drowned. In 1384, Flemish prisoners were murdered in cool blood; one of them offered himself as executioner of the rest, on condition of having his life spared, but he was afterwards murdered. In 1386, Guenne, Poitou, &c., were the theatre of new massacres and devastations, as ferocious as the former. In 1386,

persons attacked by leprosy were again accused of poisoning wells, &c., and murdered. In 1389, dreadful persecutions took place in Languedoc, which drove the populace to commit the greatest excesses. After innumerable massacres, forty thousand families fled the country, most of them to Arragon. In 1392, Clisson was treacherously assassinated by Craon ; Craon fled, but his family, with many innocent persons, were punished with great cruelty. Formerly, says Velly, criminals were executed in France on Sundays and holydays, to amuse the people. Plays, shows, festivals were then rare, but now that they are more common, executions are not reserved for days of rejoicing. In 1396, in the wars against Bajazet, the French murdered wantonly some Turkish prisoners they had taken. The state to which Charles VI., in his malady, was reduced, amid a nation which boasts of its attachment to its sovereigns, beggars all description. He had been allowed to remain six months without changing his linen, or going to bed ; he had stuck a piece of iron into his flesh, and his body was covered with ulcers. The historian says, that the sufferings of Job were multiplied on him. In 1407, after innumerable perfidies and cruelties on both sides, the Duke of Orleans was assassinated by the Duke of Burgundy. About this time all was desolation, rapine, and murder ; the most unbridled licentiousness reigned among the soldiers, who spread devastation through the country. The intrigues and animosities of the parties who were contending for the regency, or for royal favour, were such as no other nation could furnish an example of—so much hatred, vengeance, perfidy, cruelty, for so poor an object, and continuing for such a length of time, has no precedent. In 1411, a kind of militia was raised in Paris by the Count de St. Paul ; it was composed of butchers, flayers of dead animals, &c., who soon became the terror of the capital, murdering, robbing, and committing every lawless act. At the same time the king had permitted the peasantry to take up arms in their own defence, and dreadful contests ensued. They were pursued like wild beasts in the forests, hunted down and massacred for years before they were subdued ; but they soon rose up again, and the Orleanist troops repeated the same scenes in the Valois, the Soissonois, and the Beauvoisis. Ham was taken by the Burgundians and Flemish, who massacred all they met with, without distinction, then fell out among themselves, and murdered each other. The town was set on fire, and six monks, headed by the prior of their order, were the only persons who escaped. The massacres in Paris continued, and the militia of butchers increased. The scenes of cruelty and perfidy became so multiplied about this time, that nothing less than a volume could paint them, and human nature shudders in relating them. It is, however, a duty to continue. In 1413, several prisoners, friends of the Dauphin, were murdered, and massacres began again with greater fury than ever. The prisons were crowded, and prisoners were thrown into the

river nightly, or massacred in their dungeons. The nephew of the admiral Chatillon, with two hundred followers, was massacred. A conspiracy against the king and queen being discovered, the guilty were drowned at night. Many massacres, too numerous for insertion, were committed about this time, together with other cruelties. The scenes of bloodshed which took place during the factions of Orleans and Burgundy, certainly surpassed the alternate proscriptions of Marius and Sylla, of Antony and Octavius, though history has had the art to slur them over; but no European capital ever has witnessed such thoughtless profligacy, such sanguinary levity as this. Yet Velly says, with much naïveté, 'Il y avoit eu jusqu'alors peu de sang versé;' and in comparison with what follows, he was right. The 12th of June, 1418, was the day on which the great effusion of blood began. The populace broke open the prisons, murdered the jailers and the guards, compelled the prisoners to come out one by one, and thus massacred them, without distinction of age, sex, rank, or party. The chancellor, the connétable, seven prelates, the peers and magistrates of parliament, with many of inferior note, were dragged from their dungeons, and massacred. The Chatelet made some resistance, but, being set on fire, it surrendered, and the prisoners were either thrown out of the windows, upon pikes which were held below to receive them, or compelled to precipitate themselves. In the court of the palace, and near the gate of Paris, the blood flowed ankle deep, and there was not a street in which some murders were not committed. The dead bodies of the most eminent persons were dragged through the streets by the populace, as long as the limbs could hold together, and a sash (*écharpe*), cut out of the flesh of the Count d'Armagnac, was hung across his body. When pregnant women were ripped open, and their offspring was seen to breathe in their wombs, the mob cried out, 'See, those little whelps still move.' The first nobility of the nation, Luxembourg, Harcourt, Fosseuse, l'Isle-Adam, de Bar, Chevreux, Chatelux, encouraged the populace to spare no person of the opposite faction, of whom between three and four thousand were thus slaughtered in three days. The next morning the queen made her triumphal entry into Paris. The unwashed streets, which still reeked with the blood that was shed by her orders but the day before, were strewed with flowers for her approach, and the flesh of her victims was trampled up with roses under her horses' hoofs. In a few days the prisons were filled again, and the massacres recommenced. The common executioner, Capeluche, led the people on, whom the Duke of Burgundy, in token of friendship, shook by the hand. As soon as the prisons of the capital were thus emptied for the second time, in the space of a few days the populace demanded that some prisoners, hitherto unnoticed in the dungeons of Vincennes, should be delivered up to them. The request was complied with, on condition that they should be taken to the Chatelet, but



they were torn to pieces on the way by the impatient mob. In 1419, the Duke of Burgundy was assassinated on the bridge at Montereau, in presence of, and by the party of the Dauphin, afterwards Charles VII. In the same year, the Bastard Alençon slew seven hundred English prisoners, in reprisals, as he said, for his brother, killed in fair battle at Agincourt. In 1421, at the siege of Meaux, the governor, to animate his garrison, hanged all the English who fell into his hands. When Meaux was taken, the English retaliated upon four of the principal officers only. Velly is very unfair and untrue in all he says of our Henry V.; Rapin is much more correct and unprejudiced. Charles VI., surnamed the Well-beloved, died wretched, abandoned by all the world, without a friend, a relation near him, and not a prince of his family followed his body to the grave; the English Duke of Bedford alone was present at his funeral. Charles VII., though the lawful and reigning monarch, could not restrain the licentiousness of his subjects; and Tanneguy du Châtel, in the full council of state, murdered the Count d'Auvergne, in 1424. In 1435, four thousand *flayers* ravaged Champagne; and in 1436, three bishops organised a system of pillage and massacre in Paris, during which many persons were privately executed, or thrown into the Seine. In 1437, new troops of banditti, with the most distinguished men of France at their head, committed ravages not surpassed by any of the preceding. In 1439, Gilles de Laval, Lord of Rais, was executed for a series of crimes, such as never were committed by any single person. More than one hundred children of either sex had been violated and murdered by him. He was condemned to death, but, being a grand seigneur, the most cruel parts of his sentence were remitted. About five hundred English prisoners, taken at Pontoise, in 1441, were chained two and two by the neck, 'ainsi que des chiens de chasse,' and conducted, nearly naked, to Paris; all who could not purchase their ransom were thrown into the Seine, near the Place de Grève, with their hands and feet tied.

In 1443, new ravages were committed by disbanded troops, of whom a great number was finally slain. About this time a *chambre ardente*, at Arras, committed much injustice and cruelty.

Louis XI. was one of the most perfidious monarchs that ever sat upon the throne of France; but it may be questioned whether some, whose reputation for cruelty is not so great, did not surpass him in this respect. Nevertheless, having taken Lectoure, where D'Armagnac had shut himself up with his family, he sent an assassin to murder the count. The countess and her attendants, with all the females, were given up to the brutality of the soldiers, the old men and children massacred, and the place reduced to ashes. The countess was compelled to swallow poison to kill the child in her womb, and of this she died. It was by his order that the children of Nemours were placed under the scaffold on which their father was beheaded, in order that his blood might

flow over them. He also ordered his general, who was besieging Perpignan, to cut off the heads of all his enemies. When some deputies were sent from Arras to negotiate with him, he gave them a good supper, and then sent in an officer to select twelve of them, whom he had instantly beheaded.

During these reigns, the popular thirst for blood abated : but Francis I., who is extolled as a model of perfection, did, in fact, commit more murders than Louis XI. In 1535, after a solemn procession to absolve the town of Paris from the charge of heresy, he was present at the following ceremony. Six heretics were led to the stake. They were fastened to long poles, like the beam of a pair of scales, which were occasionally let down near the fire, and then withdrawn, to prolong the torture, until the bodies were entirely consumed. By his order, too, the entire south of France, from the foot of the Alps to the Durance, in order to protect it from an irruption threatened by Charles V., was laid waste. The peasants took refuge, with their cattle, on the tops of hills. Everything which the proprietors spared was destroyed by the French army, sent through the country for that purpose. Towns were burned—living creatures murdered, and Provence was converted into a desert. Francis undertook the district of Valence himself. Bonneval was his principal executioner ; and by their precautionary measures, the territory of France, her wealth, her inhabitants were more completely overwhelmed in one common ruin by the benevolent monarch, than they could have been by the enemy.

Nine years after this, Francis, who had begun by countenancing the reformists at home, and who still protected them in Germany, gave orders for the extermination of the Waldenses, which was thus executed. The Baron de la Garde attacked them suddenly—they fled—their entire property was destroyed. The women, children, and the aged, who could not follow the more robust over the hills, were soon overtaken, and most brutally treated. At Cabrieres, the few inhabitants who remained were massacred, contrary to capitulation : the women were violated in the churches ; others were burned. Merindol underwent similar treatment. The villages of La Motte, Martignac, Villelaure, Lurmarin, Genson, were completely destroyed, with about twenty-two more. Four thousand wretches were slain by the soldiers among the rocks and mountains ; others perished of want in the forests. A few escaped into Switzerland. It is thus that Mezerai eulogizes this monarch. ‘ Heretics, in his reign, and ‘ by his order, were burnt by dozens, sent to the galleys by hundreds, and banished by thousands.’

The cruelties which followed in the succeeding reigns were principally founded on religious excuses, and far exceed those exercised in any country of Europe, as well in the mode of execution as in the number of victims.

In 1459, at public rejoicings given for the entry of Henry II.,



the king, in order to enliven the feast, ordered fires to be lighted in four of the principal quarters of Paris. There some heretics, with whom the Conciergerie had long been filled, were burned. Henry, attracted by a voice which he recognised amid the screams of the sufferers, approached one of the burning piles, and there saw an old favorite servant in the flames. During his reign, the strictest orders were given to the judges to show no mercy to protestants. Some of the parliament were put in prison for having proposed to moderate the penalties against them; and all who spoke in mitigation of punishment were considered as accomplices.

Under Francis II., Anne du Bourg, one of the most eminent magistrates of France, was executed at the stake. In 1559, the houses of the protestants in Paris were attacked, their persons imprisoned, and their furniture pillaged. Their children were driven out of doors, and wandered through the streets in bands, crying out for their parents and for food, while no person dared to give them shelter. Pillage and death were the order of the day against heretics. In 1560, the most cruel executions followed the taking of Amboise. Twelve hundred persons were put to death by various modes. Some were hung—some tied to poles in bundles of twelve, and thus thrown into the Loire, which was covered with carcasses. The streets ran blood, and the air was infected. The queen and court, in full retinue, beheld these executions from the balcony of the palace. Great cruelties, too, were practised, in Dauphiné, Provence, and Languedoc, against protestants.

The reign of Charles IX. was the most fertile in religious cruelties. An edict, called 'l'Edit de Janvier,' in 1562, which promised more leniency to the reformed church, set the nation in a ferment. Quarrels began between the followers of each sect, which ended—not in fair and honest battle—but in treacherous assassinations and unmeaning, indiscriminate massacres, too numerous to be related. The Catholics were everywhere the most numerous and the most ferocious. The persecution raged in every town of the kingdom—in Paris, Orleans, Beaugency, Blois, Tours, Angers, Mans, Poitiers, Bourges, Angoulême, Amiens, Sens, Cahors, Valence, Lyons, Abbeville, Troyes, Bar-sur-Seine, Meaux, Rouen, Dieppe, Vassy, &c. The account must be reduced to a few examples. At Cahors, the building in which the reformed met for worship was set on fire, and they who escaped were murdered as they came out. At Tours, three hundred protestants were kept three days in prison, without food, then tied two by two, flayed alive on the beach of a river, and murdered in various ways. Children were sold for half-a-crown. At Sens, the massacre lasted three days, and bells were ringing all the time. The dead bodies thrown into the river floated down to Paris. The heroes of these atrocious deeds were Monluc and Des Adrets. The former has left his own memoirs, and

nothing but a perusal of them can give a just idea of his character. He revels in blood, and talks of massacres as others do of the purest enjoyments. He ordered prisoners to be saved, that he might strangle them with his own hands. Some he flogged to death. Brantome says, he instructed his children to do the like, and to bathe themselves in the blood of heretics. Des Adrets was equally ferocious. After the sack of Montbrisson, he forced the prisoners to leap off a high tower, that they might thus be dashed to atoms. Such was his pastime, one day after dinner, when one of them balked upon the brink of the precipice. 'Two attempts at such a jump,' said he, 'are too many.' The prisoner replied, 'You would not do it in ten,' and was forgiven for the repartee. These scenes lasted eight months, and were universal throughout the whole French territory. Five thousand protestants perished at Toulouse. The Duc de Montpensier committed as many murders in Poitou, as Monluc in Guienne. An attorney at Bar-sur-Seine forced his colleagues to pronounce sentence of death against his son, who had turned Calvinist, and had him executed before his own eyes; and the Count de Sommerive fought against his protestant father.

The details of these acts are so enormous, that they cannot be dwelt upon like the minutiae of a single deed; and, for this reason, they are not so striking in history. Their very frequency diminishes the horror they inspire, and their atrocity makes them almost incredible. But Anquetil, who is not addicted to calumniate France, says that the chiefs of either party, not content with murdering their enemies, tortured them, and added sneers to tortures. No treaty was sacred. Entire garrisons were massacred, and officers broken on the wheel, contrary to every stipulation. The variety of tortures was no less surprising than their cruelty; and ingenuity was applied to devise means to make death as long and as painful as it could be. The records of these modes of inflicting agony are preserved in the registers of the different towns and families that suffered; and prove that, in France, 'men, women, and children were treated with an excess of brutality unknown among the most barbarous nations.' French historians are very unfair in laying so great a share of atrocities to the account of the protestants, who certainly were the least cruel and the least perfidious party.

Such did the state of things continue to be, until the massacre of the St. Bartholomew; occasionally interrupted, however, by festivals and pageants described in the memoirs of the times, all allegorical, and representing the Catholics as blessed after death, and the protestants as condemned to eternal sufferings. The 24th of August, 1572, was the day on which the greatest cruelties recorded in the history of Christians were committed. Coligni was among the first victims; and, when thrown, but half dead, out of his window, the Duc de Guise, to be certain that the body was his, wiped the blood off his face, and f

to have trampled upon him. Then followed the bravest and best of the protestant chiefs. Henry IV. and Sully escaped narrowly. The streets were filled with persons flying for safety in every direction, and who were everywhere massacred. Houses were broken open, and Huguenots thrown out of the windows. The doors and passages were stopped up with bodies, some dead, some writhing in agony; and hundreds were dragged, still alive, along the pavement, to be thrown into the river, on which four thousand bodies were floating. The king himself fired at his protestant subjects out of his window. Two hundred Calvinists, who served in his guards, were murdered in his palace, and within hearing of the whole court. They were led out, one by one, between two files of soldiers, who immediately massacred them, and threw them in a heap, to expire as they might. The ladies of the court afterwards came to examine the bodies, and felt no horror at seeing a father, a brother, or a lover among them, and indulged in the most libidinous curiosity and comparisons, of which one instance, however revolting, must be related. The Baron de Pout, killed before the king's face, had lately been accused by his wife, who endeavoured to dissolve her marriage on the plea of impotency. Her female friends crowded to ascertain how far her complaint was founded. Neither were protestants alone massacred. The opportunity for gratifying private vengeance was too favorable to be neglected. Hundreds of Catholics perished thus. Peter Ramus, one of the most celebrated philosophers of France, was murdered by his rival, Charpentier, who gave his body to be dragged to pieces by his own pupils. Children of ten years old killed their protestant playfellows, and did not spare even infants in the cradle. A goldsmith, named Crucé, boasted that he had murdered four hundred Calvinists with his own hand.

After the body of Coligni had been dragged through the streets during three days, it was reserved for further ill-treatment at the gibbet of Montfaucon, where the king went to see it, and exclaimed, as did Jacob Almanzor, the third Almohade king, in Morocco, 'The carcass of an enemy always smells sweet.' The principal murderers were the first subjects of the kingdom. Thus far, Paris alone was the scene of murder; and there, about ten thousand persons perished in three days. But the same cruelty was repeated in every town of France, and the number of victims soon was one hundred thousand.

Among all these acts of unparalleled ferocity, but one trait of magnanimity and benevolence can be found. Vesins and Regnier were enemies. The former, a Catholic, under pretence of conducting the other to death, took him to a place of safety, and there proposed to fight him. Regnier refused, upon the plea of gratitude, when Vesins replied, 'Henceforth know me better.'

On the 26th of August, thanksgivings were solemnised in France for this massacre, and in England, the court and nation

went into mourning. At the public rejoicings, given when the Duc d'Anjou was elected to the throne of Poland, one ballet, composed of the principal ladies of the court, was particularly admired. Sixteen of them represented the sixteen provinces of France, with their appropriate attributes; neither was any person shocked at seeing them wear the spoils of the murdered, or dressed in the robes and jewels of their widows and orphans.

Thus far the blood that was shed was in massacres only; but the carnage committed in war was in the same proportion. The siege of Sancerre evinces this fact. Two thousand persons died of hunger, sooner than surrender. As in Jerusalem, or still worse, a father and mother devoured their own daughter. The town, when taken, was the tomb of its inhabitants. The Count de Tende and the Viscount d'Orthes were poisoned for having refused to execute the orders given for the St. Bartholomew.

The reign of Henry III. saw many unpunished assassinations; but, after what occurred under the preceding monarch, they deserve little notice. Dugnast was assassinated by order of the Queen of Navarre. Cymier, one of the favorites of the Duke of Anjou, killed his own brother, with the approbation of that prince. Villequier, the infamous purveyor of the unnatural pleasures of his sovereign, stabbed his wife, who was pregnant of two children, in the very palace of the king. Her crime, in his eyes, was having rejected the addresses of Henry. Villequier, immediately after this, was named governor of Paris. Maurevert, an active performer in the massacres of the former reign, was assassinated in open day. Mademoiselle de Chateauneuf, known before her marriage for her amours with the king, killed her husband ('*tua virilement*') an Italian; and another Italian stabbed a seigneur with whom he had fought a duel. Margaret, Queen of Navarre, first wife to Henry IV., and the Duchess of Nevers, whose lovers had been put to death for sorcery, had their heads brought to them, that they might indulge in the melancholy pleasure of embracing them. Law-suits were generally terminated by an assassination. Guardians murdered their wards, to get possession of their property; and, in one year, two wards killed their guardians, and inherited their estates unmolested. Nobles invited their neighbours to their houses, in order to assassinate them. Poisoning became common; and the queen-mother never failed to obtain ecclesiastical benefices for the persons she employed to administer the fatal dose, or to cast nativities. It was at her court, too, that ladies appeared with but a slight covering on the body. A resource to the treasury was the ransom which rich culprits paid to redeem their lives. Every species of debauchery was practised at court.

It was in this reign that the Duc d'Anjou, with a French army, committed the most atrocious cruelties at Antwerp. On the 12th of May, 1588, which is called the *journée des barricades*, eighty Swiss guards, dispersed through the streets, and defence-

less, were massacred by the populace. Shortly afterwards, the Duke and the Cardinal de Guise were assassinated, by order of the king. Henry III., being not thought sufficiently fanatic, was himself murdered by Jacques Clement, at the instigation of the Duchess de Montpensier, one of the furies of the 'Ligue,' who in her joy at the success of his crime, boasted of her share in the death of the monster, as he was termed, by greater monsters than himself. Bonfires were lighted up for his death in the streets of Paris. The citizens supped in the open air, and the poor were invited to their tables, where wine and meat were served in profusion, amid dancing and singing. The statue of the assassin, whom the guards had instantly murdered, was carried in triumph to the cathedral, with this inscription, 'Saint Jacques Clement, priez pour nous.' The Pope, Sixte-Quint, too, in a speech to his consistory, declared that Clement was more meritorious than Judith or Eleazar; and, while he proclaimed Henry to be unworthy of Christian burial, he ordered a magnificent funeral to be prepared for the murderer. This was a reign of individual lawlessness, rather than of popular ferocity; and, in comparison with the general average of French cruelty, is not among the worst.

The clemency of his successor had ample opportunity to show itself amid the catastrophes of the times in which he lived. But this virtue of the first of the Bourbons did not prevent the less sanguinary cruelty of rapine. Every town or village that was taken was plundered; and the chiefs of the army did not blush to own the share they got of the booty. The honest Sully avows that the plunder of the Faubourg St. Germain was worth three thousand crowns to him; and that the sack of other towns brought him in still more. The siege of Paris evinced a ferocious courage in the inhabitants, inspiring more horror than admiration. A paste was made of the powdered bones dug out of the burial grounds, which is said to have caused the death of fifteen thousand persons. Mothers devoured their children, as in Jerusalem; and, in many respects, the two cities were alike. A faction, calling themselves Zealots, arose, in imitation of the Jewish zealots, and committed several murders, until they at length paid their debt to justice. A priest, named Aubrir, gave the assassin, Barrière, a consecrated knife, to murder Henry IV. Henry, after many attempts against his life,—some historians say near fifty, fell under the dagger of Ravallac. The gallantries of Henry drove him often to be unjust, and injustice is moral cruelty. Such was his conduct to the Prince de Condé, his cousin.

In the reign of Louis XIII., the murder of the *Maréchal d'Ancre*, of his wife, and the treatment inflicted upon them, is thus related by contemporary historians. Concini, *Maréchal d'Ancre*, was shot in the king's palace, and by his order. The court, the parliament thronged to compliment him, in the *mon*



abject terms, on the success of his project of assassination. The body of Concini was thrown into a grave; but the following day it was dug up by the mob, dragged out of the church, beaten, mutilated, while his wife and son were compelled to look on. It was then hanged by the heels. A well-dressed man thrust his hand into the entrails, and licked the blood which stained it. Another tore out his heart, roasted and devoured it, dipping each mouthful into vinegar. The body was then torn to atoms, and, after more ill treatment, burnt, and the ashes sold by the ounce. Nor was this all. The wife of Concini, after every species of cruel treatment which could be inflicted on a woman, was tried for sorcery, condemned, and executed—her son declared ignoble, and banished. Le Vaseur states, that the Queen, having taken young Concini under her protection, sent for him to her apartment, and there, at the first interview, made him dance in her presence, as he had the reputation of excelling in that exercise.

The minority of Louis XIV. gave rise to new disorders, and new cruelties. The contests between the Mazarinists and the Frondeurs were, for some time, less bloody than many preceding insurrections. Cruelty was far from being unknown in them; but a stronger characteristic was levity. A camp of one of the contending armies was in the neighbourhood of Paris. All the country was laid waste and miserable; yet one of the amusements of the Parisians was to go to that camp, to purchase the clothes, furniture, jewels, and trinkets which the soldiers had pillaged in every part of France. So great was the misery at the same time, that many dropped dead of hunger. Laporte, in his memoirs, says he saw a woman lying dead on the bridge of Melun, with three children expiring on her body, one of whom was still hanging to her breast. Yet so much wretchedness did not inspire a feeling of humanity.

On the 14th of July of the same year, 1652, one of those unmeaning massacres, so frequent in the history of France, took place. The Hotel de Ville, in which the Mazarinists were assembled, was surrounded by the Frondeurs, and set on fire. A massacre was begun, in which several hundreds perished; and, so indiscriminate was the fury of the populace, that the majority of the victims belonged to the faction of the murderers. Posterior to this, popular commotions became less frequent, because the government became stronger. A character of atrocity, however, occasionally manifested itself. At a period of great glory to this monarch, the Countess de Brinvilliers, in the flower of youth and beauty, was convicted of poisoning her father, two brothers, a sister, several friends and servant, together with many patients in the hospitals, on whom she tried her drugs, under pretence of giving them relief. The Maréchal de Luxembourg, the Dutchess de Bouillon, the Countess de Soissons, mother of Prince Eugene,

a first distinction, were implicated  
forty persons were accused.

The most cruel Frenchman of this reign was, perhaps, the king himself. The revocation of the edict of Nantes was his work. The St. Bartholomew had cut off near one hundred thousand protestants in a few days ; yet, in a short time, the reformed religion counted one hundred and ten thousand adherents more than it had before the 24th of August, 1572 ; therefore, every victim produced two proselytes :—such is the effect of persecution. But the sect was no longer of any weight in the kingdom. They lived retired and peacefully among themselves, and in harmony with the Catholics. In no point of view—in no province of France, were they considered as dangerous. Yet the most cruel and contradictory laws were enacted against them. The exercise of their religion—of every branch of industry, was prohibited to them.

The sacred tie which unites husband and wife was declared null. The natural authority of parents was not respected ; and children were taken from their protestant fathers to be educated by Catholics. Protestant temples were destroyed. The dead were dragged on hurdles—without hurdles—to their grave ; sometimes by the populace, sometimes accompanied by a Catholic priest and ceremonies. Certificates of marriage were burned by the common executioner, in presence of the married pair ; the husband was sent to the gallies, the wife into seclusion, and their property was confiscated, or given as a bribe of conversion. In every province soldiers were quartered on the families of the reformed to live at discretion. The entire Vivarais was thus treated. At Montpellier dragoons were sent to preach conversion. Bearn, Languedoc, the Bourdelais, Montauban, Saintonge, Poitou, Normandy, Dauphiné, Guyenne, were laid waste by persecution. But no part of France was the scene of so much cruelty as the Cevennes. The Catholics tore the children of the Protestants out of their parents' arms. The Protestants retaliated by murdering those of the Catholics. Hundreds of either side were broken on the wheel, burned ; and thousands were massacred in cold blood. At least half a million, some say one million of French subjects were living under the hourly menace of racks, tortures, stakes, massacres, often executed, until five hundred thousand of them withdrew to more hospitable regions. It is difficult to say whether the St. Bartholomew or the persecutions of Louis XIV. were the most cruel ; but the latter involved in ruin and misery near five times as many victims as the former.

The next great epocha of cruelty, in the history of France, is the revolution of 1788 ; and this fully proved that the disposition of the nation was not softened. The period, indeed, seems to have summed up all former atrocities into one long scene ; and to have exhibited all the modes of cruelty which France had ever practised. The events are too recent to require being related, were they not incredible. General massacres without distinction ; tortures ; fire ; lingering deaths ; whole provinces laid waste ; children carried about alive transfixed with pikes and



bayonets; women violated and murdered; dead bodies devoured, not out of want, but rage; every act already told, repeated; new modes invented, were the practice of near thirty years; during which more victims perished, than during any former excesses even of French cruelty; and the levity which accompanied all this was greater than on any former occasion.

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NOTE B.—*Referred to in page 194.*

THE history of Spain affords but few instances such as those related of France; and a much larger proportion where the hand of cruelty has been suddenly arrested by returning humanity. When the Spanish people rebelled, it generally was for some definite motive; and the massacres they committed, during insurrections, were not so wanton, so gratuitous, and so indiscriminate, as those perpetrated by the vainer nation. The Jews were frequently ill treated; yet it may be doubted whether so great a number perished in Spain as in France; and the Templars, in the latter country, were murdered, while, in the former, the order was allowed to extinguish itself. The popular disturbances which took place at Cordova, in 1473, on account of religion, were very bloody; but they cannot be compared with similar events in France; and such transactions in Spain were not either one-tenth part so frequent, or one-tenth part so sanguinary. The most general and the most remarkable popular commotion of Spain was that of the Germanade, which involved almost all the kingdoms of the peninsula. It began at Valencia, in the year 1519; and thence spread to other cities. Toledo was one of the first to follow the example; and there, according to Terreras, but three or four men were murdered, though the houses and furniture of the obnoxious did not escape. At Murcia, about the same number was put to death, and with considerable cruelty. At Zamora, the infuriated mob were proceeding to great excesses; but the sense and virtue of a woman, the Countess d'Alba, kept them in such respect, that they did not even burn the empty dwellings of their opponents. At Burgos, one officer was murdered, and his body dragged in the mire. At Madrid, the quantity of the slain was very inconsiderable. At Valladolid, it was but small, and, upon the whole, it is impossible not to own that this worst and most general of Spanish massacres was surpassed at least by eight or ten French insurrections, in point of wanton cruelty and blind ferocity. It is remarkable, too, how much more easy it was to make the Spanish people listen to reason, and to bring them back to some sense of humanity in the midst of their fury. In many instances their rage was stopped by the intercession of the clergy, and the

sight of the emblems of religion. More than once the voice of a woman calmed them, and even in their worst anger there was a moderation and a grandeur which would be sought for in vain amid the ebullitions of French ferocity. It is impossible for a proud nation so entirely to depart from justice and magnanimity, as to commit the unmeaning acts which frequently occur in the history of France, and which are so degrading both to the heart and reason. Beside this, too, although the social improvement of Spain is deficient in civilisation, yet the pride and virtue of that nation have been so much maintained by the presence of a foreign foe, that Spanish cruelty has not, like that of France, increased by the refinements of later times, and it is rather less, or at least not greater now, than it was some centuries ago. One instance, selected from many, will elucidate this point. In 1412, the Castellians having defeated the Valentians, and killed the chief magistrate of the town, compelled his son, Arnaud de Bellera, to carry his father's head upon a pike. In 1789, the French mob, to the amount of sixty thousand, conducting the royal family prisoners to Paris, stopped at a barber's shop at Sevres, and compelled him to dress and powder the hair of two faithful guards, whose heads were placed on pikes, and carried as trophies of victory before the king's carriage. These facts speak more loudly than volumes could do; yet it must be added that this act, of the beginning of the fifteenth century, was the worst of the kind in Spanish history; while, in France, thousands of children, dead or alive, were carried about on pikes and bayonets, four hundred years later, in the Vendée.

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NOTE C.—*Referred to in page 197.*

AN act of cruelty, perfidy, and vengeance, with which the English are reproached by the French, is the murder of the Maid of Orleans. Certainly her execution would have been much better left undone; but, considering the times and the circumstances of the deed, it is very far from deserving the opprobrium with which it is considered by the nation whom she so gallantly relieved. In the first place, the transaction occurred in the fifteenth century, within a very few years of the time when the French heroes, Clisson, Craon, Du Guesclin, &c., without form of process, were habitually massacring their prisoners of war, in spite of stipulations and treaties to the contrary; and had the English chosen to put her to death upon the specious pretext of reprisals, they would have found hundreds of precedents; but they disdained such a subterfuge even then. In the next place, the charge of sorcery was the common belief of the age; and the English, a few years afterwards, condemned the Duchess of Gloucester to

do penance for the same offence, and inflicted severer punishments upon her accomplices. Certainly the French accounts themselves are enough to substantiate the accusation of witchcraft in such ignorant times as those; and the general belief of both armies was, that Joan of Arc was an inspired and supernatural agent. But in the murder of this heroine, the French themselves took by much the most active and the basest part; and the greatest portion of blame belongs to them, as appears from the testimony of their own historians, as collected by Velly.

On the 24th of May, 1431, Joan d'Arc was taken prisoner by Lionel Bastard of Vendome, a Frenchman, who gave her up to Jean de Luxembourg. This Frenchman in his turn sold her to the Duke of Bedford. On the 27th, Friar Martin, vicar-general of the inquisition in France, wrote to demand that she should be given up to him, '*comme véhémentement soupçonnée de plusieurs crimes sentant hérésie; crimes qui ne pouvoient se dissimuler, ni passer sans bonne et convenable réparation;*' and begging the Duke of Burgundy and Luxembourg, '*du droit de son office, et de l'autorité à lui commise par le Saint Siège, d'envoyer, le plustôtque faire se pourra, la dite Jeanne pour procéder pardevant lui, contre le procureur de la Sainte Inquisition.*' The University of Paris wrote still more urgently to Luxembourg, in these terms. '*Vous avez employé votre noble puissance à appréhender cette femme, qui se dit la Pucelle; au moyen de laquelle l'honneur de Dieu a été sans mesure offensé, la foi excessivement blessée, et l'église trop fort deshonorée; car, par son occasion, idolatries, erreurs, mauvaise doctrine, et autres maux inestimables se sont ensuivis en ce royaume. . . . Mais peu de chose seroit avoir fait telle prinse, si ne s'ensuivoit ce qu'il appartient pour satisfaire l'offense par icelle femme perpetrée contre notre doux créateur et sa foi, et sa sainte église, avec ses autres méfaits innumérables. . . . et si, seroit offensé contre la majesté divine, s'il arrivoit qu'icette femme fut délivrée.*' These documents, on the part of Frenchmen, who exclaim so bitterly against the English for the murder of the Maid of Orleans, are pretty strong. It was further demanded that no ransom should procure her enlargement, but that she should be handed over immediately to the inquisitor, or else to the Bishop of Beauvais, in whose diocese it was asserted that she was captured.

The inquisitor, the Bishop of Beauvais, the University of Paris, after using every solicitation to the proprietors of this extraordinary captive, wrote to the king of England, '*pour prier sa haute excellence, en l'honneur de notre seigneur et sauveur Jesus Christ d'ordonner que cette femme fut brièvement mise ès mains de la justice de l'église.*' Here Velly exclaims against the perfidy of the English, who urged the French to demand what they themselves so much desired. But surely the letter of Friar Martin, written three days after her capture, and before it was

possible to know what the wishes of England might be, was spontaneous; or else the French were wonderfully ready executors of English suggestions; and it must be confessed that the respectable University was sufficiently mean.

With the exception of the Bishop of Winchester, one of the worst men in England, 'who died and made no sign that he 'thought on heaven's bliss,' the tribunal that judged her was wholly composed of French prelates, with the Bishop of Beauvais at their head; and their zeal to find her guilty was excessive. Their treatment of her, too, while in prison, was unnecessarily rigorous; and she was finally executed according to the manner of the age; but with rather less cruelty than was afterwards employed by Francis I., when he chose to be present at the burning of his heretic subjects. To excuse the part which the English took in this business, and to say that they were not the instigators of her death, would be absurd, and Joan of Arc must remain an eternal reproach to the memory of the otherwise great and good Bedford. But other things may be laid to the charge of her own countrymen, not only of the party attached to the English interests, but to those whom she assisted. It was more than suspected that, when she was taken prisoner at Compiègne, it was in consequence of the jealousy excited among the officers of the French king's army, by the exploits of a woman; and that her own partisans shut the gates of the town against her. What very much confirms this opinion is, that during her captivity, her sufferings, and her trial, not a single application was made to the English in her favour, not a single attempt to ransom, to exchange, or to save her; and, at the stake, she prayed for her king, for the good Charles, who had *forgotten* her. The murder of Joan d'Arc, in the fifteenth century, was, perhaps, not as bad as the murder of Palm, by the French in the nineteenth, and not worse than the execution of the Maréchale d'Ancre, in the seventeenth. This unfortunate lady, two centuries later than the time of the French heroine, was, like her, accused of sorcery, because it was not easy to substantiate any other charge against her, except that, and having enjoyed the royal favour; and, like her, she was put to death. A remarkable circumstance which, from the contrast it presents between the two nations, must be held as characteristic, attended the condemnation of the latter, and the execution of the former. When sentence of death was pronouncing against the Maréchale d'Ancre, she hid her face in her head-dress; but by order of the judge, this was violently torn from her, that she might be more completely exposed to public view. When the Maid of Orleans was at the stake, she asked for a crucifix; an English soldier joined two sticks together in the form of a cross, which he gave her; and, with this emblem of her religion in her hand, she ascended the funeral pile.

Another accusation is the decapitation of Mary by Elizabeth.

French history presents us with a fair object of comparison. In 1269, Charles d'Anjou, after invading the kingdom of Conradin, and usurping his throne, had him beheaded on a public scaffold, along with his cousin and ally, Frederic of Austria. Three hundred years afterwards, Elizabeth put to death in the like manner Mary, Queen of Scots, who had assumed her titles, laid claim to her throne, entered into conspiracies against her, and done all that a secret enemy could do against a sovereign. If the sex of Mary made her execution more barbarous, the youth of Conradin made his unprovoked murder equally atrocious. Certainly the British queen cannot be excused; but not an act of English cruelty could be found, which is not surpassed by some analogous deed of France.

The wars of the red and white roses are said to have caused the death of one hundred thousand persons, and eighty princes of Royal blood. The religious wars of France were infinitely more sanguinary, and the acts of cruelty more wanton, more ferocious, and more perfidious. A certain obsequious veneration for the great may have prevented the death of so many princes in France; but the number of inferior persons slaughtered there more than compensated this. The ramifications of the royal families, too, in England, were endless, and the quarrel was, in a great degree, personal among them. But the worst prince of either York or Lancaster, Richard III., did not put to death so many persons as some of the best kings of France; though the horror which cruelty and injustice inspire in England has made his memory blacker than that of many. The murders commanded by Richard III. do not exceed twenty.

The English are said to have been particularly cruel to their kings. Since the Norman conquest, five of them, comprising the doubtful case of Edward V., have been murdered. Of the last eight monarchs of France, four have been murdered, and two attempted to be assassinated.

In the same manner, no comparison can be made between the blood that was shed in the revolutions of the two countries; though here again the solemnity of English juridical murders has made them more remarkable. Here and there a solitary instance of cruelty did occur, and the liberty of England was not secured without blood. But there was no war like that in the Vendée, under Rossignol and Ronsin; no massacres, like those of September 1792; no guillotine, like that of Robespierre; no reign of blood, disguised under the name of terror; no armies carrying death and devastation through the world, under the specious appellation of glory; and all the blood spilt from the first day of James I., to the last of James II., would not make up the quantity which many single days of the French revolution has shed. What, for instance, was Jeffries to Fouquet Tanville?—His whole life was hardly as bad as two mornings of the French judge. What was Cromwell to Robespierre and to

Bonaparte?—Not an hour of either in perfidy or in blood. But the investigation of this subject would lead too far; and until a longer list of greater and more atrocious English cruelties, well authenticated, can be produced, than that already given of French ferocity, it is fair to conclude that they cannot be produced.

One fact which may be taken as the epitome of this quality, in the three countries, is the treatment which a royal favourite and minister underwent in each. Concini, Marechal d'Ancre, favourite of Louis XIII., was treacherously murdered, his body dragged to atoms, and his heart devoured, in 1617. In 1453, Don Alvar de Luna, favourite of John II., king of Castille, was beheaded, according to his sentence; his body exposed upon the scaffold, and afterwards buried. The Spanish people, whom he had injured as much as Concini had injured the French, was moved to tears at his execution, and at the foot of the scaffold raised a subscription to say masses for the repose of his soul. Wolsey, the favourite of one of the worst English monarchs, was disgraced, exiled, and long enjoyed a splendid retirement. When M. de Lally was condemned for his conduct in India, he was taken to the place of execution in a dung-cart, and his mouth was gagged to prevent him from speaking. Admiral Byng was shot with all the solemnities due to his situation, and with proper humanity. Both condemnations may have been equally unjust, but that executed in England was accompanied by no wanton ferocity.

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NOTE D.—*Referred to in page 491.*

AN art which has not yet been mentioned is music; the earliest, perhaps, of the fine arts, in which a proficiency was made.

Although forms, colours, and many other of the properties of bodies immediately perceptible to man, coexisted with sound, yet the means of transcribing them were not directly within his reach; and some knowledge of mechanical tools, and chemical products, must have been acquired, before sculpture or painting could be practised. Every quality of nature finds in the human mind the faculty by which it is perceived; but every quality cannot so instantaneously be imitated by art, as sound can be by the intonations of the voice. As every shape and every hue suggested design and colouring, so did the ‘*liquidæ avium voces*,’ the ‘*zephyri cava per calamorum sibila*,’ (according to Lucretius,) suggest music. But the instruments by which the former are performed were distant; the means of the latter were at hand. The liquid voices of birds must have taught, that analogous cadences might be produced by the voice of man. The sighing of Zephyr in a hollow reed instructed him to substitute his own breath for the wind; and, if a chord was accidentally



heard to vibrate, it was easy to stretch another string in imitation of it. Musical instruments everywhere were the consequence of the desire inspired by the first simple accents of music, and the earliest nations are known to have cultivated it. The names of its inventors stand among the first-born of mortals and immortals in every part of the ancient world ; and there is not a country, however ignorant it might be of other imitative arts, that had not its lyre and its harp, its fistula and its cornua, its tympanum and its sistrum. Antediluvian nations knew it ; Hebrews, Phœnicians, Persians, Greeks, of every time and climate, Arcadians, loved and practised it, and held it in the highest estimation as a powerful means of exciting and directing human passions.

The opinion of Plato was, that no change could be made in a nation's music, without producing a similar change in its constitutions ; and that nothing is more easy than to elevate or depress the soul by harmony, adapted to those ends. Aristotle, who was not always of the same opinion as Plato, agreed with him on this head. Polybius attributes the amenity of the Arcadians to their love of music, and the ferocity of the Cynetæ to their neglect of it. According to the Pythagoreans, our souls are formed of harmony, and music calls into action their primitive dispositions. Arion, when he had charmed the dolphins that he had attracted round his ship, threw himself into the sea, and one of the delighted monsters carried him safe to Tænarus. Timotheus, after raising the fury of Alexander by the Phrygian melody, calmed him by the Lydian measure. Many similar instances are recorded of the influence of music in former days, which prove, either that the sensibility of the ancients was very great, or that the art was much more intense than it is at present. Music now is robbed of almost all the power once imputed to it, insomuch that the tales of other days appear fabulous.

The means which this art possesses, however, are very far from having retrograded, for both the instrumental and the scientific branches have shared in the general improvements of successive ages. The harps and lyres of our forefathers could yield but few sounds ; their horns and trumpets could not give the full tones of modern instruments ; and the organ alone, which so majestically fills the temples of the Almighty, surpasses all that they knew. The mighty harmony of a numerous orchestra was yet to be discovered, and, upon the whole, if music ever could be successfully applied to the passions, it must be since its power and diversity have been multiplied.

Whence comes it then, that its wonders have ceased, and that it can no longer produce the effects attributed to it by some of the greatest philosophers of the world ? admitting those effects to be true. It is because reason has been more extensively developed, and has assumed a higher influence than it had in those times. As reflection becomes powerful, passion becomes less excitable, and the causes which once could rouse it prove in-



efficient. Some passions, indeed, no reason can subdue; and the effect of national airs is undeniable. But let any band of modern musicians attempt to overthrow the British constitution with a tune, and the fallacy of Plato's doctrine will instantly be discovered. Political events, indeed, have, in very recent times, been influenced by music; and *Ca ira*, the Marseillois hymn, &c., assisted the revolutionary enthusiasm of France. But it was that very revolutionary enthusiasm which had first combined those airs; and they only reacted upon their origin. The frantic revels of liberty had associated certain ideas with certain tones, and the tones lent new madness to the orgies. Had that revolution not been an act of insanity, music would have had no power in it. If the British constitution is proof against the assaults of every melody, Phrygian or Lydian, executed by Orpheus himself, it is because that constitution is a work of consummate reason; and in rational beings, such beings as could frame that system, reason is more powerful than music. Although music is far from being bereft of all its power, yet its principal influence is now reduced to association. Certainly there are tones and measures in unison with many of our feelings; but how much more strongly do they act through the medium of reminiscences, than directly. Were this not so, the '*ranz des vaches*' would call the men of every country to their homes, and give the '*heimweg*' to more than the Swiss. But when a man in distant lands hears again the melody which charmed him in his native rocks and valleys, he feels the want of his frozen hills, and sickens for the snows of his youth.

It is because music has lost so much of its power, while the other arts have preserved all theirs, and innumerable other branches of intellect have exercised a new sway over society, that it has been omitted in this Chapter. It has now shrunk into so insignificant a characteristic of nations, that all considerations upon it may be neglected, amid so many objects more important. The most enlightened empire of Europe is far from being the most musical. France cultivates the art as much out of fashion as feeling. Spain, like every southern and excitable country, is much addicted to it, and still prefers the playful warblings of the Moorish guitar. Italy is the true and native seat of melody; and her very language is moulded by music. Germany is more profound and learned in the art; and no people half so scientific is half so musical.

END OF VOLUME THE FIRST.





